

Jordan Times

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Coalition crisis does not threaten talks—Beilin

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Middle East peace talks are not threatened by a crisis facing the government of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin told Israeli radio Saturday. "The peace process is not threatened, it will resume as planned next week whatever the outcome of the crisis," he said. Mr. Rabin warned on Thursday that a long-running battle between coalition partners was threatening to bring down the government and put an end to the peace process. The row centres around Education Minister Shulamit Aloni of the left-wing Meretz Party, whose strident secularism has provoked a confrontation with the Shas orthodox religious party. Shas has threatened to quit the government unless Mr. Rabin fires Mrs. Aloni. Mr. Rabin's coalition stands or falls on the six Shas deputies in the 120-seat parliament. Meretz has 12 and Labour 44. Mr. Rabin meanwhile cancelled a trip to Strasbourg, France, planned for Monday to deal with the crisis. Israel government sources predict there will be a major reshuffle, with Mr. Rabin moving Mrs. Aloni to another ministerial post to placate Shas. Mrs. Aloni met with Mr. Rabin on Thursday and is due to see him again Sunday.

Pakistan expels 230 Egyptian militants

CAIRO (AFP) — Pakistan has deported to Sudan 230 Egyptian Muslim militants who are wanted in Egypt in connection with a wave of fundamentalist unrest, a Foreign Ministry official said Saturday. Egyptian officials said the militants were expelled after the repatriation of these militants — Afghan war veterans who settled in Peshawar after the fall of the communist regime in Kabul. An Egyptian security source last week charged that Afghan veterans, estimated at 1,500, financed and set up terrorist operations carried out by fundamentalists in Egypt to destabilise the government. Some 140 people have been killed in fundamentalist violence since March 1992, including three foreign tourists. Pakistan's alleged deportation of 230 militants has angered the Egyptian authorities. "Pakistan should have handed over these terrorists to Egypt because their presence at the Egyptian-Sudanese border is a time-bomb," the official who declined to be identified told AFP. "Pakistan opted for a compromise" by expelling them to Sudan rather than to Egypt, he said. Saudi businessman Osama bin Laden, according to the official, acted as a middle man between Pakistan, Sudan and the militants to finance their trip and accommodations in Sudan.

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Assad, McGovern review peace process

DAMASCUS (AP) — Former U.S. presidential candidate George McGovern discussed the American-sponsored Middle East peace process with President Hafez Al Assad on Saturday. McGovern, who heads the non-profit Middle East Policy Council, arrived Friday from Amman on the second leg of Middle East tour that will also take him to Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.

Five killed in Yemen clashes

SANAA (AFP) — Five people, including two soldiers and a police officer, were killed in clashes this week in Yemen, officials reported Saturday. A colonel and an enlisted man were killed Friday in a gunbattle with armed men who forced their way through an army checkpoint in the eastern province of Hadramaut, the official SABA news agency said. It said the assailants were arrested and their weapons seized. A spokesman for the Interior Ministry reported that a police officer and two car thieves were killed Wednesday in two separate incidents north of Sanaa. Three other policemen were also wounded.

Egal elected Somaliland president

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, prime minister of Somalia from 1967 to 1969, was elected last Wednesday president of Somaliland by a council of elders, an informed source said Saturday. Somaliland covers the north western section of Somalia and declared itself independent following the fall of Somali dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in January 1991. It is bordered by Mr. Egal's predecessor Abdourahmane Ahnoud. All lost the post for failing to achieve recognition for Somaliland from the international community.

Iraq to free Kuwaiti family

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has agreed to free to Kuwaiti family of six Sunday after holding them 31 days for crossing the border illegally, a member of the family said Saturday. Sa'ud Abdul Aziz, the eldest member of the family, told reporters Iraq had agreed to hand them over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to take them home. Officials at the Culture and Information Ministry told reporters the family were free. Mr. Abdul Aziz, 21, came down to the lobby of Baghdad's Al Rasheed hotel with his two sisters and three brothers to break the news to journalists. "Tomorrow they will hand us to ICRC," he said, adding that no ICRC official had contacted them during their detention.

More than 200,000 in S. Arabia for Haj

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia said Saturday more than 200,000 people had arrived so far in the kingdom to perform the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. The Saudi Press Agency quoted immigration officials as saying 200,973 pilgrims have arrived by air, land and sea. Pilgrimage sites in Saudi Arabia normally host up to two million pilgrims during the Haj which lasts at least five days.

Malaysia distances itself from lobby for Israel

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Malaysia said Saturday it would not get involved in discussion with Australia over that state's reported lobbying in South-East Asia to win wider international recognition for Israel. "Australia knows our position very clearly. I think it is the wrong country to approach," Kamil Jaafar, the top civil servant in the Malaysian Foreign Ministry, told reporters. Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said Thursday that Canberra's move to win wider recognition for Israel in South-East Asia was in response to a request from Tel Aviv which was eager to improve its relations in Asia, especially with the Muslim countries with which it had little or no contact. The predominantly Muslim nations of Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh have refused to recognise Israel.

Ashrawi says delegates studying Israeli draft

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said that Palestinians were displeased with an Israeli draft agreement on self-rule but were not rejecting it out of hand. She said on CNN Television that a statement by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Tunis rejecting the draft reflected the Palestinian negotiators' "extreme displeasure." But Dr. Ashrawi declared: "The fact that there is some regression in terms of the position that we had arrived at earlier does not mean that it is entirely useless or should be rejected out of hand." Israel's consul general in New York, Colette Avital, said on the same programme: "One does not expect that a draft proposal should immediately be accepted lock, stock and barrel by the other party." Israel presented the draft to the Palestinians Thursday at the end of the second week of a three-week round of Middle East peace talks in Washington. Chief Palestinian peace delegate Faisal Husseini flew from Washington to Tunis late Friday to brief the PLO leadership on the latest developments at the latest developments at a meeting aimed at mapping out a response to the Israeli offer. Dr. Ashrawi said the PLO was "expressing scepticism about the

fact that they thought we had achieved more progress in our negotiations." "We told the Israeli delegation, and I would repeat it here, that we are taking the draft proposal very seriously. We have not responded to them officially yet," she said. PLO spokesman Yasser Abed Rabbo told Reuters in Tunis: "We totally reject such a project which gives only some municipal powers to the Palestinians to reduce the weight of occupation while legitimising it." "Such a project again puts the peace negotiations on the road to impasse," Mr. Abed Rabbo said. An Israeli-Palestinian working group has been discussing a statement of principles which could serve as a framework agreement on self-rule for the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Avital said the draft covered issues such as the powers of a self-rule body, the territory where it would function, and the link between the interim stage of self-rule and a final settlement of the status of the occupied territories. Israel has met a long-standing Palestinian request by accepting international monitoring of elections in the occupied territories, the deputy chief of the Palestinian peace team, Saad Erakat, said.

"The presence of a third party is a Palestinian request which has now been satisfied," Dr. Erakat told AFP. Israel had adamantly refused international monitoring of the elections in which the Palestinians would choose a Palestinian council that will administer the five-year autonomy plan in the occupied territories. Israel has argued that the presence of international monitors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would undermine its authority in the occupied territories. On Friday the spokesman of Israel's peace team, Yossi Gal, said the delegation had accepted "external (international) monitoring" to the election. But a senior Israeli official in Washington said Israel would not allow the United Nations to run the poll. Dr. Erakat did not mention any U.N. monitors but he said the Palestinians would accept "any international supervision agreed upon by both sides." Mr. Gal said the offer on election monitoring was contained in the eight-point draft which was presented Thursday to the Palestinian delegation. The Palestinian delegation was expected to accept or reject the plan when peace talks resume next week, he said.

Islamic movement deputies assail Arafat for resuming peace talks

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Muslim Brotherhood movement Saturday launched its strongest attack yet on the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), accusing it of treason and rejecting the legitimacy of its representation of Palestinian people. "The PLO's legitimacy as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people was established at Arab summits. But let the PLO put this issue to the people and they will decide on that," Ibrahim Khreisat, spokesman of the Brotherhood bloc at the Lower House of Parliament, told a press conference. "The (legitimacy) of representation comes from the will of the people and not from the decisions of summits," influential Brotherhood Deputy Hammam Sa'ud added. Mr. Khreisat's attack on the

PLO came one day after demonstrators at a march organised by the Brotherhood at Al Wihdat refugee camp accused Palestinian delegates to the Arab-Israeli peace talks of treason and called for killing them. "The PLO has committed treason by going to the peace talks. All Arab regimes that sanctioned the participation in the talks have committed treason," Brotherhood Deputy Ziad Abu Ghanem told the Jordan Times at the end of the press conference. Deputy chief of mission at the Palestinian embassy in Amman Omar Al Khanib said a reply to the Brotherhood charges will come from the PLO leadership in Tunis. He said, however, that the Palestinian people are the party which decides who represent them. "The (Palestinian) people have chosen the PLO" as their representative, he said.

Tension between the PLO and the Brotherhood heightened after PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat accused the Brotherhood of interfering in internal Palestinian affairs when they sent him a letter urging the withdrawal from the peace talks with Israel. In the letter, copies of which were sent to all Arab parties to the peace talks, the Brotherhood deputies asserted that participation in the peace talks contradicted the will of the Palestinian people which demands the liberation of all its occupied land. The Brotherhood said the PLO broke its own word by agreeing to attend the ninth round of the peace talks, which started in Washington on April 28, before the repatriation of all Palestinians who were expelled by Israel to South Lebanon in December last year. The Arab-Israeli peace talks came to a halt after Israel expelled the 417 Palestinians whom it accused of being activists of the Islamic resistance. (Continued on page 5)

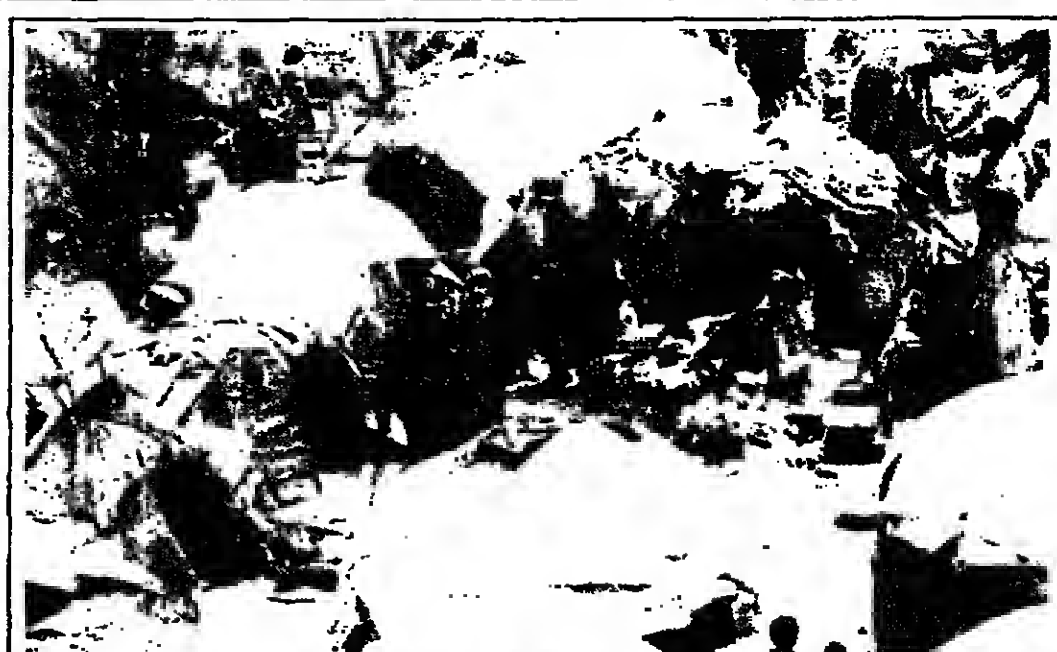
Israel says Syria must prove peace commitment

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israel says Syria must take action to prove to both Syrians and Israelis it has made an irrevocable decision to make peace with the Jewish state. Israel's chief negotiator with Syria at Middle East peace talks in Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, told a meeting of Jewish-American Friday that was one of three issues Syria must address before Israel would say how far it was willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights. The other two were that Syria must further elaborate on the nature of peace it was willing to accept in return for withdrawal. Also it must explain whether its agreement to peace with Israel would be dependent on other Arabs reaching a settlement. "I think that both the Syrians and we have identified that a deal is in the offing," Mr. Rabinovich, who is Israel's ambassador to the United States, told the American Jewish Committee. "We know roughly what the shape of it is. We know that we are both interested in an agreement, to a deal. We are haggling over the terms of the deal," he said. Mr. Rabinovich said it was not necessary for Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to make gesture such as the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to occupied Jerusalem in 1977. That act led to Israel's first treaty with an Arab state. But he argued that Mr. Assad

should "take a series of measures that will have resonance and will indicate to both the Syrian public and the Israeli public that Syria has made an irrevocable decision to cross the line and make peace." Mr. Rabinovich said the Labour government elected in Israel in June last year broke new ground in the talks with Syria when it said for the first time it was ready for some sort of withdrawal on the Golan. Syria responded at the latest round of talks in Washington that it would be ready for "full peace" in return for a full withdrawal. But it refused to elaborate on the nature of peace unless Israel committed itself to the full withdrawal. "Our position is that we have told you enough," Mr. Rabinovich said. "We will say no more and now it is your task to tell us that you are giving us full peace and to elaborate that full peace means diplomatic relations and normalisation." He said that Syria must also confirm "this is a peace that will have its own life." "Yes, we are negotiating a comprehensive settlement but we want to know from you, the Syrians, that when we make a deal. This deal will stand regardless of whether others make the same deal," Mr. Rabinovich declared. Syria has not made clear whether the "full withdrawal" for which it will exchange "full peace" is from the Golan Heights

Demirel fails to get presidency in first round

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's presidential ballot will go to a second round after front-runner Suleyman Demirel failed Saturday to win the two-thirds majority required. Prime Minister Demirel, tipped as the most likely candidate to replace Turgut Ozal who died of heart failure last month, won 234 votes from the 450-member Grand National Assembly. Mr. Demirel, 68, received support from his conservative True Path Party (DYP) and the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), the junior member of his two party coalition. "The vote reflected the tendency of the coalition government," Deputy Prime Minister Erdal Inonu, the leader of the SHP, told reporters after the vote count. Mr. Demirel heads an 18-month-old DYP-SHP coalition in his seventh stint as prime minister. A second vote will take place on May 12, when a two-thirds majority will again be required to elect the president. Mr. Demirel is expected to be elected on third ballot, slated for May 16, when a simple majority of votes will be needed, deputies from the ruling coalition said. If the president cannot be elected on the fourth ballot, scheduled for May 20, parliament will be dissolved for general elections. Only 422 deputies cast ballots, Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Yildirim Ahi announced in the nationally televised vote.



RAIDS CONTINUE: Nigerian peace-keeping soldiers search for arms in a refugee camp in the Somali capital of Mogadishu (AFP photo)

Iraq not to compensate Jordanians for losses in invalidated currency

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Iraq told Jordan Saturday it would not compensate Jordanian businessmen and investors who might have lost millions of dollars after Baghdad withdrew old bank notes from circulation. "The Iraqi authorities told us clearly today that they will not make any exceptions for anyone and change the withdrawn money with new notes for any affected party," a senior government official told Reuters. "They made it very clear that this also applied to Jordanian traders who were paid in the withdrawn currency in return for goods they sent to Iraq."

Jordanian businessmen and food suppliers — probably Iraq's main trading partners — had pinned high hopes that Jordan would be able to negotiate a settlement with Baghdad to help compensate them. Iraq, battling to boost its ailing currency, Tuesday withdrew from circulation 25-dinar premium-priced banknotes printed in

Europe before the 1990 Gulf crisis. Baghdad said banknotes held abroad had been smuggled out illegally in a bid to undermine its economy and would not be replaced. It slammed shut its borders for six days. It said only Iraqis inside would be able to swap them for new notes.

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Brotherhood restates opposition to temporary legislation on elections

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Muslim Brotherhood bloc at the Lower House of Parliament Saturday warned that changing the elections law through a temporary legislation would undermine confidence between the executive and legislative branches and would cast doubts on the credibility of the democratic process in Jordan. "The Muslim Brotherhood deputies are waiting for the government to announce the parliamentary elections on their date under the permanent law that should not be replaced with a temporary law," Brotherhood spokesman Ibrahim Khreisat told a press conference Saturday. He said any change to the law should be processed through the House, which should not be bypassed by issuing temporary laws.

"We will consider the issuing of a temporary law contradictory to the will of the people. It would render false the democratic process," said Mr. Khreisat. Mr. Khreisat said, however, that the Brotherhood will not boycott the elections should such a change be in the making, adding that the Islamic movement is prepared to deal with all possibilities. Islamic Action Front (IAF) president Ishaq Al Farhan has said that his party was carefully drafting its elections strategy, awaiting the government's decision on the elections before deciding which and how many of its candidates will contest the next elections, which are scheduled for later this year. Government officials have been non-committal on whether a change in the elections law is forthcoming, only confirming that the present cabinet of Sharif

Zeid Ben Shaker will not address any issues pertaining to the elections. His Majesty King Hussein said recently that changes to the elections law are still under consideration, adding that elections for the 12th Parliament will be held around November. Informed sources told the Jordan Times last week that any decision on changing the elections law will have to be taken with the consensus of all concerned parties. "Changing the election law will not be a government decision," said a source who requested anonymity. According to the sources, the mechanism for changing the elections law — if such a change is to be made — is expected to be similar to the one through which the National Charter was endorsed in 1991: The king would form a committee representing all political trends and entrust it with the process. Mr. Khreisat, however, said his movement would reject such a mechanism, insisting that the House

U.S. revives threat to seek Libyan oil embargo

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House has revived a threat to seek an oil embargo against Libya to force the handover of two Libyans accused of blowing up a Pan American airliner over the Sahara. In his letter to Ms. Cohen, Mr. Lake said the Clinton administration had made a "serious effort" to persuade Security Council members, particularly Britain and France, to agree on tighter sanctions, including an oil embargo, before the sanctions came up for review on April 8. In Jakarta, Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Mustafa Al Montasser called Saturday for a partial lifting of the U.N. ban on flights so that thousands of Libyan Muslims can join this year's pilgrimage to Mecca. He told a news conference Libya wanted fellow Islamic countries including Indonesia to lobby the Security Council to temporarily lift its year-long air blockade. "We are asking Indonesia together with other OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) countries... to use its good offices to open a corridor for our pilgrims to go to Mecca," he said.

Libya unless it surrendered the suspects in the Pan Am Flight 103 case as well as other agents implicated in the 1989 bombing of a French Uta airliner over the Sahara. In his letter to Ms. Cohen, Mr. Lake said the Clinton administration had made a "serious effort" to persuade Security Council members, particularly Britain and France, to agree on tighter sanctions, including an oil embargo, before the sanctions came up for review on April 8. In Jakarta, Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Mustafa Al Montasser called Saturday for a partial lifting of the U.N. ban on flights so that thousands of Libyan Muslims can join this year's pilgrimage to Mecca. He told a news conference Libya wanted fellow Islamic countries including Indonesia to lobby the Security Council to temporarily lift its year-long air blockade. "We are asking Indonesia together with other OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) countries... to use its good offices to open a corridor for our pilgrims to go to Mecca," he said.

U.S. and allies consider near-total Serbia embargo

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Washington and its allies are to pursue Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's offer of imposing an almost-total embargo on the Bosnian Serbs. White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said Saturday. "They will pursue... Mr. Milosevic's offer to help insure that his borders are not penetrated. This is a chance to test Mr. Milosevic's sincerity in this regard," said Mr. Stephanopoulos following a two-hour meeting on the Balkans war between President Bill Clinton and his top advisers. Mr. Stephanopoulos said that the United States would continue consulting with its European allies in the next several days over possible military action in the region. Mr. Clinton asked Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who returned from a six-day European swing Friday, to continue talks with leaders there by telephone over the weekend. During Saturday's meeting Mr. Christopher spelled out Europe's reception of the White House proposal to use military might,

including air strikes. Also at the meeting were Vice-President Al Gore, Defence Secretary Les Aspin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell and Washington's U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright. On Friday, Mr. Clinton said military pressure on Bosnian Serb forces would be limited and would not open the floodgates to an even wider, long conflict. "The operations would have a beginning, a middle and end," he said. Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Saturday he hoped the Bosnian Serbs would approve a peace plan in a referendum and opposed any military intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the vote. "Some kind of spontaneous decision is not possible. We still must go through the referendum in Bosnia," Mr. Yeltsin said, speaking at a joint news conference with Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Mr. Yeltsin was referring to a referendum that the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb parliament decided to hold on the U.N. peace plan.

U.S. officials express optimism on Middle East peace talks

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The prospects for reaching a Middle East peace agreement have never been better than they are today, two State Department officials said Friday.

Amoassador Samuel Lewis, director of Policy and Planning at the State Department, and Dennis Ross, special adviser to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, discussed the U.S. role in the Middle East peace talks during sessions of the American Jewish Committee's 87th annual meeting.

Itamar Rahinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, also discussed the current status of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

Expressing optimism about the peace negotiations, Mr. Lewis said, "I don't think the prospects have ever been as good as they are today."

"We are not there yet...but we are well on the road to a real breakthrough this calendar year," he said. Commenting on the current round of negotiations in Washington, Mr. Lewis said there has been "considerable movement" on all tracks.

There are "plenty of enemies of peace" in the region "who are going to be trying to blow up this process with terror, misinformation, and political wiles," Mr. Lewis said. "But I think we are going to keep it on the rails," he added.

Mr. Lewis credited the positive movement of the peace talks in part to improved U.S.-Israeli relations and to a more active U.S. role in the peace process.

The discussions that took place between Mr. Christopher and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin — in order to get the peace process back on track after Israel expelled some 400 Palestinians to southern Lebanon last December — created a "bond of confidence" between the two governments, Mr. Lewis said.

Mr. Christopher's trip to the Middle East helped to cement that bond of confidence, Mr. Lewis said. "The U.S.-Israeli relationship at the end of the trip was now in the kind of shape it needed to be in to get the peace process going again," he said.

"I don't believe we would be sitting at the (negotiating) table today or see the beginnings of the first real concrete negotiations going on" without the improvement in U.S.-Israeli relations, Mr. Lewis said.

During his trip to the region, Mr. Christopher also "succeeded in establishing himself as a serious, objective statesman in his contacts with Arab leaders," Mr. Lewis said.

According to Mr. Lewis, the U.S. commitment to take a more active role to push the peace process forward, offer ideas and suggest ways around obstacles "made an impression not only on the Arabs, but also Prime Minister Rabin."

Asked to define the U.S. role as full partner in the peace process, Mr. Lewis said the United States will serve as a catalyst, intermediary and honest broker when needed. Full partner, however, does not mean the United States will mediate or arbitrate the negotiations, he pointed out.

"We are not setting ourselves up as a judge and then impose a settlement," he said.

Speaking earlier in the day, Mr. Christopher's special adviser Dennis Ross also discussed the U.S. role as full partner in the peace talks.

"Full partner has nothing to do with getting in the way of direct negotiations; it has everything to do with promoting direct negotiations," he explained.

"There can be no substitute for direct negotiations. No peace can be imposed and no peace can be endured that is not negotiated directly by the parties," Mr. Ross stressed.

As a full partner, the United States can help the parties identify fruitful ideas and clarify positions taken by the parties, he said.

"There will come a point when our role will be one of presenting ideas we think will bridge gaps. But that point will come at the time in which the parties themselves have made a major effort to narrow the gaps and the time in which the parties themselves have adopted a problem-solving approach," Mr. Ross said.

Mr. Ross said the parties in the current negotiations are demonstrating a "much more problem-solving mindset." This development is a "hopeful" sign for the peace talks, he said.

Commenting on the current negotiations, Mr. Rahinovich said both Israel and Syria believe "that a deal is in the offing." At present, Israel and Syria are "haggling over the terms of the deal," he reported.

Israel has told Syria that "when you give us real peace we would be willing to give withdrawal," the ambassador said. Israeli views on withdrawal can only be explored after Syria "elaborates on what full peace is," he stressed.

Israel would also like the Syrian leadership "to talk to our people" and "take a series of measures that will have public resonance," Mr. Rahinovich said. After these measures have been taken, Syria will "hear from us on what we mean about withdrawal," he said.

On the Palestinian track, Israel measures its success "on a daily basis," the ambassador said. The Israeli-Palestinian track "has to be tended with care," he said, adding that despite the difficulties, the Palestinians and Israelis have displayed a "genuine interest" in achieving an agreement.

Mr. Rahinovich stressed that to achieve peace between Israel and Syria and the Palestinians, all parties must make concessions and move toward peace. "There has to be give and take," he said.

There have been "significant developments" in the Lebanese and Jordanian tracks, the ambassador said. However, the Lebanese and Jordanians "are waiting for the Syrians and Palestinians to make the first steps," he added.

Mr. Rahinovich also expressed a "sense of optimism" about the prospects of reaching some kind of agreement in the near future.

"We are in a position where we could still hope to have concrete achievements in 1993," with the possibility of working towards a comprehensive settlement in 1994, the ambassador said.



EGYPTIAN TRIAL: Two veiled women, wives of suspects on charges of bombings of defendants, sit in court in Haykest, Egypt, and assassination attempts in Cairo (AFP photo)

Iraq ready to supply data if U.N. agrees it met demands

BAHRAIN (AP) — Iraq is ready to reveal the sources of equipment for its nuclear weapons programme if the United Nations in return certifies Baghdad has complied fully with disclosure demands, a weapons inspector said Friday.

The U.N. inspector, Richard Hooper, said the Iraqis wanted assurances that the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would agree Iraq has complied fully with Security Council Resolution 687.

That resolution called for Baghdad to dismantle its programmes to build weapons of mass destruction and disclose the names of the suppliers.

"What they're saying is, 'we've cooperated... but we want some assurances that having done so, we get something back,'" said Mr. Hooper, an American.

He said the Iraqi demand was unacceptable to the United Nations.

Mr. Hooper headed a team of 14 experts that arrived in Bahrain Friday after spending a week in Iraq. The inspectors' Special Commission has its regional headquarters in Bahrain.

Another stumbling block has been Iraq's refusal to accept U.N. resolutions that establish a long-term weapons-monitoring programme to ensure Baghdad's continued compliance.

Mr. Hooper said the Iraqis told him they had "no objection to the technical aspects of those resolutions... but formally would never accept them."

That Iraqi position, too, is not acceptable to the United Nations, Mr. Hooper said.

He said inspectors were confident that Iraq's nuclear-weapons facilities were "out of business" but that in the longer term, "How do I know that some guy doesn't have uranium in his basement some place?"

Mr. Hooper's team took water samples at 15 sites throughout Iraq, these will be taken back to Vienna, the IAEA headquarters, to be tested for any traces of nuclear activity.

Also on the team were three experts who checked machine tools in Iraqi facilities north of Baghdad that might have dual purposes. The Iraqis insist the machines are not usable for nuclear-weapons work and the inspectors must decide whether that is the case.

Border based ends work

The U.N. commission that marked the border between Iraq and Kuwait over the objections of the Iraqi government finished its work Friday.

The U.N. Iraq-Kuwait boundary demarcation commission, which provoked an Iraqi walkout when it decided on the land border last year, received a report at its final Geneva meeting that the sea border also has been marked.

"The commission marked the waters so that both countries could have access for shipping to the Gulf."

"Hopefully, it's going to be accepted by both parties," said Miklos Pinter, the U.N.'s chief cartographer and secretary of the commission, but he said he did not know what Iraq would do.

Iraqi officials reached at their mission in Geneva refused to comment, but Kuwait welcomed the commission's work, which was based on a 1963 agreement between the two countries.

Iraq has previously refused to accept the 202-kilometre land

Saudi scholars establish unprecedented rights group

NICOSIA (AFP) — Six Saudi scholars, in a rare critical move against the authorities in Saudi Arabia, have announced the creation of a human rights committee to fight what they call oppression and injustice.

The group calls itself the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights and includes a university professor as well as a lawyer, according to a statement received Friday by AFP.

It called for cooperation with Saudi "officials... and every person who seeks to eliminate injustice and support the oppressed" but it avoided any direct mention of the Saudi authorities.

Quoting from the Koran and underlining strict adherence to Islamic law, the six pledged to "contribute in whatever way may help eliminate injustice, support the oppressed and defend the rights prescribed by Sharia."

They urged the Saudi people to inform the new commission on all incidents of oppression and injustice in Saudi Arabia.

Two members of the committee, Abdullah Ben Suleiman Al Masari and Abdullah Ben Abdul Rahman Al Jahrin, were signatories to a critical political document addressed to King Fahd in July 1992 by 107 Saudi religious figures.

The document, entitled Al Islah (advice), called for a separation between political and legal bodies in Saudi Arabia, the abolition of "torture and travel bans" as well as a review of laws to ensure they conform with Sharia.

Saudi Arabia, which is home to Islam's holiest shrines, does not have a written constitution. The king rules in accordance with Sharia.

Islamic critics of the government have been making their voices heard since the Gulf war, when Saudi Arabia accepted the deployment of hundreds of thousands of western troops on its territory.

'U.S. believes Iraq behind Bush plot'

WASHINGTON (R) — The Clinton administration believes the Iraqi government was behind a plot to kill former President George Bush three weeks ago and considers it a very serious provocation, a senior U.S. official said Saturday.

Kuwaiti authorities uncovered an alleged plan to assassinate Mr. Bush during his triumphal April 14-16 visit to the emirate, which was liberated from Iraqi occupation by a U.S.-led military coalition in February 1991.

Although the death plot was reported shortly after Mr. Bush's visit, it went largely unnoticed in the United States. But a senior official told Reuters the administration had "credible intelligence" that it was sanctioned by Baghdad and took the matter very seriously.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said the administration had spent a week discussing the plot and ways to respond to it.

When it was suggested that any state-sponsored effort to kill a former American leader would be tantamount to an act of war, the official replied "Exactly."

The Washington Post reported Saturday that President Bush's son sent a team of Secret Service and counter-terrorist investigators early this week to Kuwait City, where Mr. Bush was feted for leading the allied victory.

The newspaper said a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) team preceded the agents sent this week.

The Kuwaiti government arrested 16 people and seized hundreds of pounds of explosives during Mr. Bush's visit, the newspaper said.

Those in custody and another Iraqi still at large have been charged with conspiring to assassinate Mr. Bush and commit other acts of terrorism.

The Post said the plotters had three different plans to kill the former president, two involving car bombs and the other a suicide attack by a man with explosives.

The plotters never came close to Mr. Bush's entourage and it is unclear what led to their arrest, the paper said.

It said Mr. Clinton's advisers were divided on how to respond, with Justice Department officials urging that the suspects be extradited to the United States to face criminal charges.

Other officials are arguing for direct retribution, the Post said. It said that those in favour of a stern response included Deputy National Security Adviser Samuel Berger, Defence Under-Secretary-designate Frank Wisner and CIA Director James Woolsey.

House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said in a statement prompted by a Post inquiry that if the administration determines Iraq was "involved in state-sponsored terrorism, the United States will take appropriate action against Iraq."

Russia reconsiders threat to veto funds for Cyprus force

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Russia has agreed to reconsider its threat to veto a resolution to reform the financing of the U.N. peace-keeping force in Cyprus (UNICYP) after Cyprus and Greece offered to contribute more than half the costs.

"It is a very important step," Russian U.N. envoy Yuri Vorontsov told reporters after a vote on the measure was postponed for the third time this week.

The council will take up the issue again Tuesday.

The resolution seeks to have the costs of the 1,500-member force, one of the longest-running U.N. operations, apportioned among all U.N. members.

UNICYP has been stationed on the island since 1964 to help keep peace between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

Unlike most U.N. field operations, it is financed by voluntary donations, with troop-contributing countries themselves bearing most of the burden.

Britain, which, together with Austria and Canada, has a large contingent serving with UNICYP, is eager to spread the costs among all U.N. members.

"The resolution seeks to have the costs of the 1,500-member force, one of the longest-running U.N. operations, apportioned among all U.N. members."

Gouled reelected in first round

DIJIBOUTI (Agencies) — Hassan Gouled Aptidon was reelected president of Djibouti for a fourth term after the first round of a multi-party presidential election, according to official results released Saturday.

Five candidates had contested Djibouti's first multi-party presidential election.

The Interior Ministry said that the incumbent head of state won 60.71 per cent of Friday's vote.

The result means that President Gouled, who has ruled this little Horn of Africa state since independence from France in 1977, does not have to face a second round.

His main challenger, Mohammed Djama Elabe, trailed with 22.03 per cent, while rival candidate Aden Rohleh Awalle won 12.29 per cent, the results said.

A total 49.74 per cent of the 150,487 electors abstained, according to the Interior Ministry.

Interior Minister Idriss Harhi earlier denied opposition charges of electoral irregularity. Mr. Aden Rohleh accused the authorities of keeping opposition officials out of some polling stations, notably in the districts of Obok and Tadjourah and some in Dikhil.

Mr. Aden Rohleh, leader of the National Democratic Party, claimed that 400 soldiers whose names were not on the rolls voted at one station.

Opposition activists claimed that many citizens who had not reached the legal minimum age of 18 years at the Feb. 28 cut-off date cast ballots anyway. No violence was reported.

The Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy, which launched a guerrilla war in November 1991 in the northern and western regions populated by the Afar group, boycotted the vote.

Mr. Gouled has boasted his army five-fold to 15,000 men since the rebellion broke out over Afar claims of poor representation in the government. The guerrillas have been driven into the mountains.

France maintains about 4,000 troops in its strategically located former colony. French soldiers positioned themselves between the two sides last year, but have since withdrawn to barracks.

France, which sent 10 observers to monitor the election, on Friday offered to mediate between the warring sides.

Djibouti, its capital with the same name, lies on the Gulf of Aden and covers 23,000 square kilometres. It is bordered by Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Power fault sets off blasts in Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — An overloaded power transformer blew up Saturday in the southern suburbs of Beirut, setting a chain of explosions at a nearby storehouse of butane gas cylinders, police said. One person was slightly injured in the accident in the densely-populated Bir Abed district, they said. A police spokesman said the transformer exploded at 11:20 a.m. (0820 GMT) and started a fire, which quickly spread to the adjacent warehouse. The heat set off a number of gas cylinders over the next 10 minutes. Firefighters were able to control the blaze and thwart further explosions by noon (0900 GMT), the spokesman said. Seven blasts echoed across the capital as the transformer burned, and Beirut radio stations later interrupted regular programmes to assure residents that these were not bombs. Bombings killed thousands of people during the 1975-1990 civil war. But no serious sabotage acts have been reported in more than a year as government troops, backed by army units from neighbouring Syria, regained control of Beirut and its environs and dismantled militia groups that had fought the war.

Trial of Egyptian militants adjourned

CAIRO (AFP) — The trial of 14 Islamic militants accused of attacks against government officials and foreign tourism has adjourned until next week, amid defence charges that one suspect had been tortured. The new hearing was set for May 15 at the request of the defence, which also said it needed more time to study the cases of the 14 men, four of whom are on the run. The court also agreed to a defence request to have a doctor check a suspect who was allegedly tortured during police interrogation. The suspects, who face the death penalty if convicted, denied the charges against them which were read out Saturday at the high military court. They are accused of involvement in the April 20 failed bid to assassinate Information Minister Safwat Al Sharif, who was hurt by flying glass while his bodyguard and driver suffered gunshot wounds in the attack. The accused are also charged with the March bombings of the Pyramids and a tour bus outside Cairo's antiquities museum, which left no casualties, as well as an attack that killed a police officer in Cairo.

Botha to make first visit to Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Pk Botha is expected next week in Egypt on the first visit here by a South African foreign minister. A Foreign Ministry spokesman announced Saturday. Mr. Botha, who arrives next Saturday, will have talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on bilateral and African affairs ahead of the opening in Cairo on June 28 of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit. Egypt does not maintain diplomatic links with South Africa and the government has repeatedly said ties would only be set up in line with a unanimous OAU decision. But officials do not exclude a decision by Cairo to go ahead and forge ties with Pretoria.

Former Afghan minister hiding in Switzerland

BERNE (R) — Former Afghan Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil is hiding in Switzerland in fear of his life, Swiss refugee officials said. "He has not been given political asylum, but we are allowing him to stay until it is safe for him and his family to return to Afghanistan," said a spokeswoman for the federal office for refugees. "For security reasons his address in Switzerland is being kept secret," she added. The daily Neue Zuercher Zeitung newspaper revealed that Mr. Wakil, who served in the Soviet-supported government of President Najibullah from 1986 until its collapse in 1992, arrived in July that year seeking asylum. The newspaper said his presence was kept secret and his request for asylum was rejected last January. It added that Mr. Wakil had been allowed to stay with his wife and seven children on the personal intervention of former Swiss Secretary of State Klaus Jacobi. Mr. Jacobi and Mr. Wakil met a number of times during international negotiations for a resolution of the Afghan civil war.

Ukrainians demand release of Demjanjuk

KIEV (R) — Ukrainian nationalist groups called on Friday for the release from an Israeli prison of John Demjanjuk, who was convicted of operating gas chambers in Poland during World War II and sentenced to death. Several dozen demonstrators, defying a ban by local Kiev authorities, demonstrated outside parliament and the Israeli embassy with blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flags and banners. "John Demjanjuk is a victim of Israeli justice," one placard said. "Freedom for Ukrainian Demjanjuk," said another.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR																											
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Amn... 644241/2 Jabal Amman Maternity... 62262 Malhas, J. Amman... 636140 Palestine, Shmiciani... 664171/4 Shmiciani Hospital... 669131 University Hospital... 635845 Al-Musharraf Hospital... 667279 The Islamic, Abdali... 666127/37 Al-Abdi, Abdali... 664164/6 Ibhan, Al-Mubajrec... 777101/3 Al-Basir, J. Ashraf... 751112/8 Army, Marja... 891611/5 Queen Alia Hospital... 602240/50 Amal Hospital... 674155 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital... (09)983323 University Hospital... (09)900580 Jn Sina Hospital... (09)986732 Al-Hikma Modern Hospital... (09)99990 IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital... (02)225555 Greek Catholic Hospital... (02)227275 Jbn Al Nafes Hospital... (02)247100		AGABA: Princess Haya Hospital... (03)314111 FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) 09:15... 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Kuwait: The stumbling block

KUWAIT should be the last Arab state to want the collapse of any effort to heal the wounds created by the Gulf war of 1991. Yet, this is in effect what Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid confirmed recently when he revealed that the Arab reconciliation effort that he was spearheading was dropped at the insistence of Kuwait at last month's Arab League Council meeting. The Kuwaiti rejection of Arab mediation, Dr. Abdul Meguid reported, was based on the curious reasoning that time was not ripe yet for even discussing the proposal. We do not know of a more appropriate time to put into effect Arab reconciliation especially after the disastrous consequences of the Gulf war two years ago. Surely two years are more than enough to start the process of reconciliation among Arab countries. Given the Kuwaiti-favoured perimeters of Dr. Abdul Meguid's initiative, it is perplexing that the Kuwaiti government found it fit to reject it. According to reliable information, the Arab rapprochement would be pursued on the basis of investigating the reasons for the Gulf war as well as on eliminating its negative results. The plan also calls for reaffirming the Arab states' sovereignty over their respective territories and natural resources, something that the Arab World as presently constituted upholds religiously and Kuwait in particular is very zealous about. The Arab League's initiative also calls for an unequivocal rejection of the use or the threat of the use of force by any Arab state against another. Such ideas would seem to be exactly what Kuwait would like to safeguard and enshrine in the Arab body politic. The major shortcoming of the current Arab plan is the distinct absence of any element of Arab nationalism as a criteria for future inter-Arab relations. Still Kuwait sees no merit in the existing Arab plan even though it treats the Arab states as sovereign countries that are not bound in the least by the notion of one Arab Nation. Under these limited circumstances of the Arab initiative we see no legitimate reason for Kuwait to keep on derailing the attempt to bring back harmony among the Arab capitals. In this vein, we support Dr. Abdul Meguid's view that the Arab World cannot accept the Kuwaiti "no" as a final answer and that he will persevere in pursuing his efforts during an Arab tour that will bring him face to face with all the Arab leaders. The Arab World cannot be held hostage to whims by any single country even though that state was the main victim of the Iraqi invasion in 1990. The other Arab governments, especially those in the Gulf, should be asked to prevail on the Kuwaiti leadership with a view to activating a serious plan for settling the differences between the various Arab capitals.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday described attempts by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to reduce its services to the Palestinian refugees in Jordan as a form of pressure exercised on Jordan in order to make it accept orders that do not serve its national interests. Another form of pressure is that which is being exercised by the Western naval forces trying to carry out and ensure continued sanctions on Iraq, said the paper. Jordan has repeatedly rejected all forms of pressure and told UNRWA that it does not accept any reduction of services to the refugees in Jordan at a time when it retains the same level of services in other Arab states hosting refugees, the paper said. It said that pressure by the agency or the naval forces does not conform to the requirements of the peace process now going on in Washington. Jordan, added the paper, has hosted thousands of evicted people from Iraq and Kuwait during and after the Gulf war and has been playing host to thousands of others, incurring additional social and economic burdens. The paper said that all forms of pressure on Jordan must end so that this country can pursue its noble mission of caring for the displaced persons on the one hand and continuing its drive to attain a durable and just peace on the other. UNRWA's attempt to reduce services is bound to add to the burdens Jordan is bearing as a result of conflicts in the Middle East as the naval forces are burdening the economy of this country, the paper added. It said that it is hoped that the naval force and the agency will put an end to their harassment and pressure on Jordan, a country oriented towards achieving peace and stability in the region.

AL DUSTOUR daily attacked the Serbs of former Yugoslavia for pursuing genocide against the Muslim population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbs' disregard of the latest agreements on a ceasefire and peace in the embattled nation is a flagrant violation of international laws at a time when the Western nations are trying to establish the so-called new world order, said the daily. The attacks by Serbs on Muslims can be classified to the criminal work of outlaws who ought to be stopped by the world community, said the paper. It said that condoning the Serbs' actions can only prolong the tragedy of the innocent civilians who look to the world community for help and to the European nations to find a way of restoring peace. The paper said that the Serbs' demolition of a mosque is not only an act of terrorism but organised crime, called ethnic cleansing, now being exercised in former Yugoslavia and causing further rifts between Christians and Muslims of the country. The demolition of the mosque demonstrates the Serbs' determination to disregard all international rules and to defy the United Nations and all of its resolutions, the paper added. The paper urged the United States and its European partners to act speedily and put an end to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the aggression that is being waged on the civilian population there.

Iran's relations with West set to remain strained

By Youssef Azmeah
Reuter

DUBAI — Hopes that President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani would lead Iran out of international isolation have all but evaporated as the pragmatic cleric prepares to seek a second five-year term.

Western and regional experts now believe relations between Iran and the West will be on a knife edge as long as the mullahs are in power in Tehran.

Mr. Rafsanjani is widely expected to win a second term in June elections on a platform of economic reform and more opening to the world but his record has apparently failed to impress the outside world.

"His active search for better ties with regional neighbours and for an end to confrontation with the West have largely failed because he remains saddled with a radical legacy that is impossible to shed," a Western diplomat said.

Iran's confirmation of Khomeini's death edict on British author Salman Rushdie is a case in point.

Many Arab leaders, led by Egypt and Algeria, are alienated by Tehran's alleged backing for Islamic militants seeking to replace their governments with purist Muslim regimes.

Arabs and westerners alike are also alarmed by Iran's rearmament programme that has already introduced a powerful new weapon — submarines — into the Gulf waterway through which much of the West's oil supplies are channelled.

Western experts said European nations like France and Germany may wish to see easier ties with Iran that would help their firms penetrate a potentially lucrative market.

But the United States and Britain remain adamantly opposed to Iran's clerical rulers.

Their determination to block any moves that would ease Iran's isolation appears to have strengthened under the Clinton administration, which according to a Washington-based source is "obsessed with Iran's abysmal human rights record."

Pro-Rafsanjani Iranian officials appear to be coming to terms with continued Western hostility although they fear it would slow down the president's vital economic reforms.

"He, or any leader of the Islamic state, cannot be seen to be veering away from Khomeini's vision," one said.

Mr. Rafsanjani became president after the death in 1989 of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini,

founder of the Islamic republic.

His pragmatic approach and rivalry with Islamic radicals led to expectations that Mr. Rafsanjani, a skilful politician who worked his way up through the ranks of the clergy, would steer Tehran away from Khomeini's militant policies.

The Iranian officials said that radical leaders have lost many of their positions of power, but radical sentiment continues to permeate middle and lower ranks of the bureaucracy, especially in such sensitive departments as security and information.

"Rafsanjani's radical opponents have been removed from many top positions but they remain a significant influence within Iran as the self-appointed torch-bearers of Khomeini's legacy," Rafsanjani cannot cross them," an Iranian official said.

The president was determined to rejuvenate and liberalise a deeply troubled economy that has yet to recover from eight years of war with Iraq and inefficient and heavy-handed state control.

"He (Rafsanjani) must make the economy work. He cannot get bogged down in infighting with radicals over issues that often sound to outsiders like medieval arguments over how many angels can stand on the point of a needle," he added.

Western officials, while welcoming Mr. Rafsanjani's economic liberalisation, say his refusal to take on the radicals meant that Iran would remain an international pariah.

"The language of fundamentalism cannot sit easily together with the language of peace and diplomacy," one official said.

The alleged involvement of Iranian security agencies in action against political exiles, including assassinations, has kept Iran firmly at the top of U.S. and other lists of states said to be involved in terrorism.

Its rearmament programme, fully justified in its own eyes at a time when its neighbours are arming themselves to the teeth, is widely seen as a serious threat in a region that sits on two thirds of the world's oil reserves.

Actions by local Iranian officials on Gulf islands disputed with the United Arab Emirates, though largely rescinded, led to fears Tehran might use its muscle against weaker neighbours.

"Whatever Rafsanjani says or does, the antagonism towards Tehran looks set to remain a constant in its relations with the West...no rapprochement is possible until Iran sheds its fundamentalist legacy," a Western expert said.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Iraqi move brings law to a lawless state of affairs

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

The decision taken by the Iraqi authorities to withdraw the 25-dinar denomination of the Iraqi banknotes from circulation within a week was a sound financial decision taken by a responsible manager, and deserves understanding, taking into account the Iraqis' current difficult circumstances.

This was not the first time such a decision was made. The late Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser made a similar decision thirty five years ago, in the aftermath of the Israeli-Anglo-French military aggression of 1956 and the massive capital flight that followed. The Egyptian monetary authorities withdrew then the 50 and 100 pound banknotes. In both cases, the borders were tightly sealed for a short period of time and the smugglers and underground currency-dealers abroad suffered heavy losses.

American President Richard Nixon did something similar on Aug. 15, 1971, when he decided to end dollar conversion into gold at a fixed price.

It is illegal for the Iraqi currency to be exported outside Iraq. Therefore, all those who bought or hoarded Iraqi dinars were breaking the Iraqi laws, and sometimes the laws of their respective countries. Those who break the law to make easy money at the expense of others should not be rewarded and, when possible, should be punished.

It seems that all the banknotes which were subjected to withdrawal from circulation are actually outside Iraq. It is estimated that 90 per cent of them are in the hands of moneychangers and other private speculators in the Gulf states, especially in Dubai. Those speculators foolishly expected the Iraqi dinar to sooner or later rebound, as did the Kuwaiti dinar, and that Iraq would redeem, at some time in the future, all these billions at the official rate of 33.20 per dinar. Should these unrealistic expectations have materialised, the speculators would have doubled their capital 100 times at the expense of the Iraqi people. Now that they have lost their shirts, they have only themselves and their bad judgement to blame.

Very few so-called Swiss banknotes are still inside Iraq to be

exchanged. Most likely, those who come up with big amounts of the 25-dinar banknotes for exchange will be investigated to make sure that the money is theirs and that they are not mere collaborators with speculators abroad. The risk of the death penalty is too high to allow anyone to play with fire.

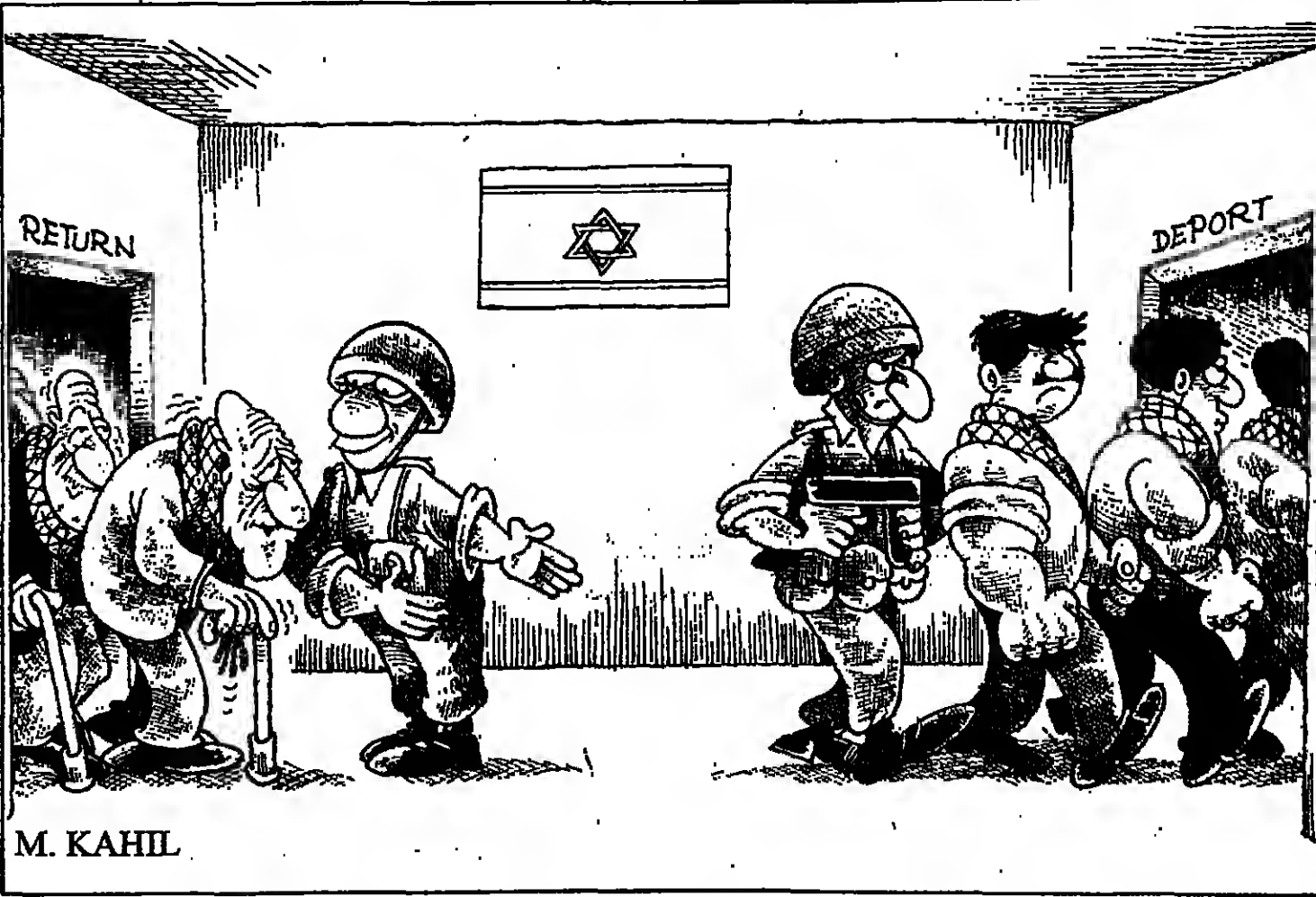
Reportedly, the American-sponsored rulers of Kurdistan refused to accept the newly issued Iraqi dinars and insisted on the old originals, which were printed in Europe before the Gulf crisis. Those rulers now realise, the hard way, that they cannot challenge the legitimate authorities in Baghdad.

The withdrawal of the 25-dinar banknotes may mean the withdrawal of some 25 billion dinars from circulation. Such a step will strengthen the Iraqi currency remaining in circulation and reduce inflation.

As far as Jordan is concerned, there are no dependable figures. The best guess in town is that the Jordanian speculators may be in possession of up to 500 million Iraqi dinars (ID), or the equivalent of JD 15 million calculated at the price of 30 fils per ID which was prevailing before the Iraqi decision taken on Tuesday. A similar loss was incurred several years ago by Jordanians speculating on the Lebanese pound.

The Jordanian share of Iraqi dinars can be roughly estimated at two per cent only of all the stock outside Iraq. Those people made a bad investment, they sort of gambled. It is like buying a lottery ticket, where the odds to win are 1 to 100. Well, they did not win, and the value of the ticket simply vanished. Hard luck!

The enemies of Iraq will of course use the opportunity to tarnish the image of Iraq in the eyes of the Jordanian people, hoping to reverse their sympathy with the plight of the Iraqi people. The BBC, Voice of America, and especially Radio Monte Carlo, let alone Israeli radio and T.V., made efforts in that direction, but in vain. As long as the Iraqi people continue to be targeted by the West, and unfairly starved to death, Jordanians will understand all their actions and stand by them until they recover their freedom and independence.



International observers establish human rights foothold

By Kerman Turner
The Associated Press

HINCHÉ, Haiti — Armed with only a U.N. mandate, 10 foreign observers are working in the territory of an army major who gained notoriety by threatening to crush every bone or cut off the hands, feet and head of anyone who cooperates with them.

The army watches the civilian observers and they keep an eye on the army while tracking violence done in this regional market town by the soldiers and allied thugs known as "chef-batons".

"Sometimes it's cat-and-mouse, but when we follow them, they are not beating people," said the head of the observer mission, Jean-Rene Marcoux, a Canadian.

Soldiers and chef-batons have killed hundreds of people in Haiti and imprisoned thousands without charge since the army overthrew Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected president, in September 1991.

In the few weeks since coming to Hinché, the observers have visited beating victims in the hospital and talked to political prisoners in jail. They have pointed out abuses to the local army commanders and contacted hundreds of people hiding in safe-houses or in the bush.

Mr. Marcoux and other team members, from Brazil, Colombia, Chile, St. Lucia and the United States are among more than 100 observers in the first phase of a U.N.-Organisation of American States effort to return Haiti to democratic rule.

They seek respect for human rights guaranteed by the Haitian constitution and international treaties.

Haiti's rulers have withstood outside pressure to step down, including a hemisphere-wide embargo and a U.S.-backed diplomatic initiative by U.N. special envoy Dante Caputo.

Mr. Marcoux said the observers will remain for at least a year. But they and local civil rights advocates worry that they might have to leave without a political settlement having been

reached between Mr. Aristide and the army, exposing those they have contacted to retaliation.

"Someday the international community must send more than people with typewriters" to protect Haitians, said Rev. Raymond Decaluwe, a Belgian priest in the village of Los Palis.

The army tries to suppress all political meetings and any sign of support for Mr. Aristide in Hinché and surrounding hamlets. The soldiers squeeze money or land titles from the peasants by threats of arrest and torture.

"The repression is a thousand times worse than what we suffered during the Duvalier dictatorship" overthrown in 1986, a schoolteacher said. Like many others, he asked for anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Maj. Jodel Charles, a heavy, muscular man in a black T-shirt who serves as mayor of the town, would not discuss the mission with a reporter who visited his modest home half a block from army headquarters.

"I follow the orders of my

commander-in-chief," Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras, commander of the Haitian army, he said.

Hundreds of farmers active in the region's Papaye Peasant Movement have been driven into hiding by a wave of beatings, torture and extortion since the coup. The movement, whose slogan was "organisation or death," campaigned vigorously for Mr. Aristide.

Days after the coup, soldiers destroyed the movement's headquarters and looted its treasury and pension fund as part of a nationwide campaign against grass-roots organisation.

Mr. Marcoux and his observers believe their presence makes a difference in this dirt-poor central plateau.

"When we first arrived, there was a soldier on nearly every corner," he said. "Now they are not so visible."

Soldiers carrying rifles pedal bicycles through the streets of Hinché and man guard posts in surrounding villages.

Maj. Charles patrols the arid countryside in a four-wheel drive vehicle

and sends the barracks' two trucks, laden with troops, through the highlands. Even though Port-Au-Prince is only 130 kilometres away, the punishing drive takes 4½ hours on a road that is little more than a trail.

Guards at a roadblock inspect everyone entering or leaving Hinché.

"There are no human rights, no laws," said Rev. Decaluwe, the Roman Catholic priest. "The people who have the guns are in charge."

He said the military had urged local chef-batons to suspend abuses and keep their mouths shut because they were being watched by the mission.

From his church, he and nearly everyone else in town used to hear the screams at night of people being beaten in a hilltop guardhouse.

The priest believes more people have gone into hiding since the observers arrived.

On a typical day that began at 8 a.m. and did not end until nearly midnight, Mr. Marcoux and other

members of his team checked on several people who were hiding out near the town.

Strolling down the dirt lane of one village, they were greeted by a man in a yard who raised a clenched fist and said softly, "we're glad you're here."

A woman approached with two toddlers in tow. The children cried, "bring my daddy home, bring my daddy home." Mr. Marcoux invited her to meet him later, but a soldier appeared outside the meeting place and she did not come.

Fearing retaliation, Mr. Mar-

coux sent a patrol truck back to the village late that night over a perilous path turned to mud by rain.

Back in Hinché, Maj. Charles showed up outside the mission's headquarters at about midnight. Michael Wilson, an American observer, ventured out.

As if formally ending that day's game of watch and chase, Maj. Charles grasped Mr. Wilson's hand tightly and did not let go. "I'm going home now," the major said. "I'm going to bed. I'm going to sleep. And God bless you."

LETTERS

Charity starts at home

To the Editor:

Is it fair that one third of this small community is dying of hunger while less than half the population is only getting wealthier and greedier?

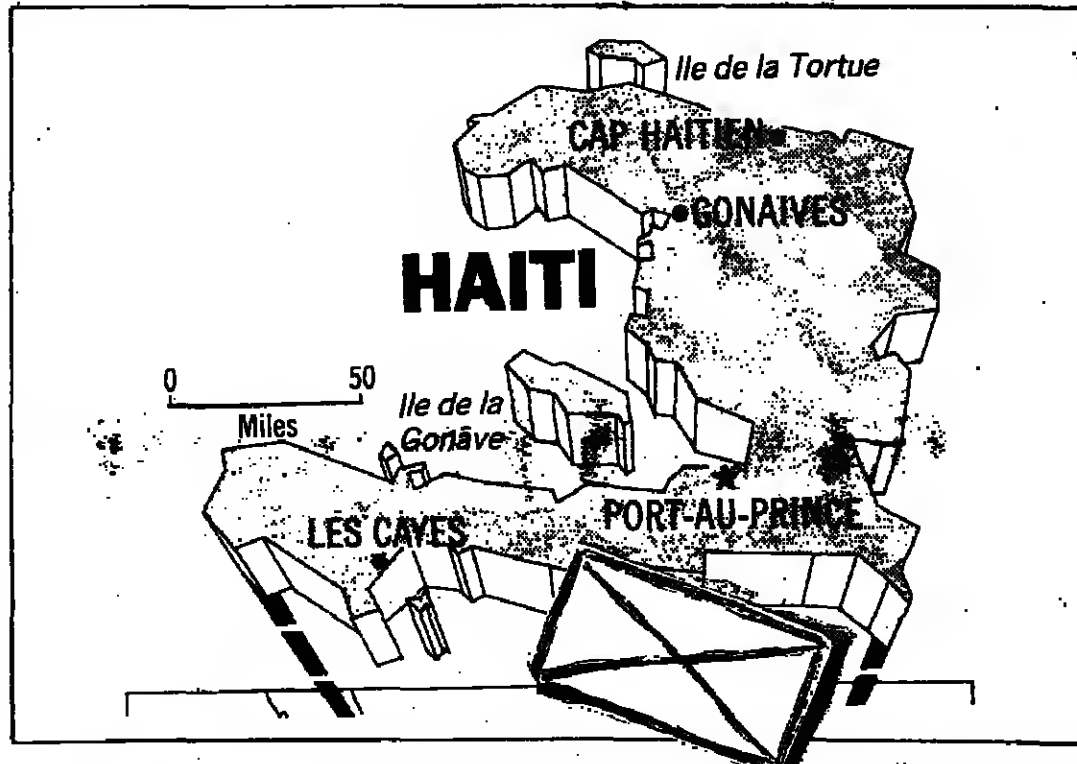
Is anyone really doing anything besides feeling bad? I am a seventeen-year-old school student who is aware of this issue, probably more so than most of us are. We have a major problem here: Jordan has a total population of three million, and already one million live below the poverty line. Is this a normal situation, where only 10 to 15 per cent are the ones really well off, living oblivious of the ugly forms of poverty surrounding them? When we say people are dying because they have nothing to eat, does this mean we have to resign ourselves and say this is their fate? Should we really care because this is the kind of life they were meant to have?

It seems that with all the help, fund-raising and charity work people are still suffering. This is not a problem that we can solve by tossing a few coins over to the many begging hands.

Before we are so considerate about souls being lost outside Jordan, it is an obligation that we do something to help all these families we have suffering in our own country.

Amal T. Abboushi,
P.O. Box 35152,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.



UNIVERSITY PROMOTIONS

How truly do they reflect capabilities, serve the society?

By Dr. Majed A. Dabbas

THE current university system in Jordan suffers from many shortcomings which are reflected in unfair regulations and outdated policies. At the core of these shortcomings is the current promotion system for university staff members. The system is based entirely on a few published papers in making promotion decisions. Unfortunately, these papers are written, in general, for the sole purpose of meeting promotion conditions and not as a true research effort. In most cases, they lack any tangible benefit to the society.

Another system discrepancy penalises professors in technological subjects, such as engineering, by assuming their research needs to be the same as those in other areas, for example, Arabic literature.

If such a system continues to be the yardstick for measuring knowledge and rank, our universities will languish in their current status. Much worse, true knowledge will continue to be measured by titles that do not necessarily reflect improved qualities.

Several articles that have appeared in local papers over the past few years have attacked the

current university promotion system as utterly inefficient and questioned the lack of interaction between the universities and the society. Some university professors have gone as far as to describe their universities' graduate programme as a farce.

An important issue for a university professor is to move ahead within the ranking system and not remain stagnant. Naturally, a promotion brings certain privileges among which gaining more teaching experience and, most importantly, serving the needs of the university by being a famous scientist that attracts scholars and research funds.

Therefore, granting such promotions and privileges based only on a few publications is extremely detrimental to the university and its staff.

No-one can prove that such papers have either increased the knowledge or technical skills of their writers to warrant all the aforementioned benefits. True research to engineering is extremely expensive, time-consuming and resource intensive. In a developing country like Jordan, with scarce resources, it must be

well-planned and goal-oriented to avoid squandering funds.

Though promotion schemes in educational establishments in the U.S. and the United Kingdom are somewhat complex, they are, however, realistic and fair. Several factors are considered for promotion purposes. To mention a few, teaching performance, advising and counselling students, refereed publications, service to the profession and university, quality of academic degrees attained and professional experience, are the factors typically listed.

Quality, rather than quantity, is heavily stressed. As an example, someone with one worthy published paper may qualify better than someone else with numerous publications. The fairness of the system is striking in the sense that what is required can be achieved. The reasons are: Availability of enormous funding and needed facilities, a reasonable teaching load with ample time for research and professional experience gained through encouraged consulting to industry. By contrast, our universities adopt a promotion scheme based

solely on the aforementioned papers. No other factors are taken into account. Publications in internationally renowned journals, where hundreds compete, are considered on par with those in recently established local research journals, whose credibility, or even impartiality, is doubted by many. Hence, it is unfair to assume that these papers transform their author into a more knowledgeable person than his peers or make him a better teacher mastering the subject matter. One U.S. professor, who is familiar with our system, commented on a recent visit to Jordan: "Your university took the shell of our system and left out the core."

Due to many apparent reasons, true research in engineering is almost unattainable in a developing country like Jordan. Despite this, archaic rules exist as if to complicate matters further. One such rule, for example, does not allow authors to benefit for promotion purposes from research done while supervising M. Sc. theses. It ignores the fact that research in engineering, whether theoretical, experimental or field

work is resource intensive. Unlike other disciplines, one cannot dream up new ideas on his own. The norm in engineering research is to have graduate students collect and analyse the data as part of their training process. A visiting U.K. professor recently commented on this rule by simply saying: "If that applied at my university in the U.K., I would never have published anything."

As if that were not enough, recent regulations prohibited assistant professors from supervising M. Sc. theses and attached conditions to their teaching graduate courses. By contrast, a letter received by the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Jordan, for instance, showed that one of its sponsored Ph. D. candidates, at one of the best U.S. universities, is supervised by an assistant professor. One wonders if our regulations are better than those in the U.S. and the U.K. New professors are encouraged there to concentrate on graduate level work both in teaching and research. Our system seems to work in reverse order.

Even at the best known institutions, with excellent true research records, professorial rank does not imply automatically more

knowledge in certain fields. Sometimes, new professors are the most qualified to carry on with their area of specialisation when dynamic subjects, like engineering, are concerned. Technology is changing very fast. Knowledge cannot be simply equated with rank.

At a conference in 1980 in the U.S., a speaker listed contributions to civil engineering by other countries. The share brought in by the Arab World was nil. Therefore, as young universities with limited resources, research ambitions should be realistic. Teaching, which remains the sacred mission of educational establishments, should play a big role in promotion decisions. It deserves a greater weight than the promotion-oriented research papers which produce no tangible benefits to the society.

In the developed world, universities that are research-oriented, provide their professors with all the needs for success. Further, they rely on research funds as a sizeable source of income. In Jordan, especially in engineering, one cannot claim that the work published has covered university expenses or helped in solving industrial or technological problems. Today,

sources of income are government funds and students fees.

Realising that the four papers are what counts in the end, professors are bound to sacrifice the quality of teaching for the sake of promotion. In many cases, the papers are regarded as a safety net by those who produced them to get tenure and enjoy the entitled privileges. One cannot recall a single benefit received by Jordan from research conducted in engineering. However, turning out unfit graduates is definitely detrimental to the whole country and the engineering profession. Did such research, since the inception of the engineering college, lead to new discoveries, breakthroughs or contributed new theories? According to the Time magazine of March 21, 1988, the U.S. and Japan spent in 1986, \$119 billion and \$72 billion respectively, for funding research. This fact should make one less frustrated. Funding proper engineering research is usually beyond the budgetary limits of

many countries. Therefore, it should be geared to the needs of the society and avoid wasting efforts and money by trying to reinvent the wheel.

Actually, it would be more beneficial to Jordan, if regulations relieve the promotion pressure on engineering professors. The idea of publish or perish is futile. With minimal resources, if any, true research will never flourish. Instead, time should be allowed to investigate areas where locally-conducted studies can produce any tangible benefit to the society. This requires encouragement by the universities to encourage professors to interact with the growing industrial base. It may be worth looking at the system enjoyed by American professors, who probably are the best and most productive in the world.

Dr. Dabbas is teaching at the University of Jordan's Civil Engineering Department

Arafat assailed

(Continued from page 1)

ment, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad.

The Brotherhood, which opposes Arab-Israeli talks on ideological grounds and advocates war against Israel to liberate all of Palestine, accused the PLO of abandoning the expelled by agreeing to resume the talks before they are allowed to return to the occupied territories in accordance with Security Council Resolution 799.

"We are bewildered by your decision to pursue American lies," said the Brotherhood in a letter to Mr. Arafat, who is expected to attend the peace talks, the Brotherhood deputies told Mr. Arafat and other Arab leaders in the letter.

Mr. Arafat reportedly rejected the Brotherhood's letter as intervention in Palestinian affairs, saying that Palestinian decisions are taken through a democratic process.

In a new letter they tried to send to Mr. Arafat Sunday, the Brotherhood deputies claimed that the will of the Palestinian people was not heeded by the decision to go to the fifth round of the talks. "Where is democracy (decision making) when the majority of the Palestinian people announced

their rejection of the decision (to go back) to the talks?" read the letter.

The deputies accused the PLO of making numerous concessions detrimental to the interests of the Palestinian people and said they hold the organisation responsible for "every concession made in the Palestinian and Arab positions" in the peace talks.

"Other Arab parties will not have gone to the peace talks had it not been for your decision," it resumed, said the deputies in the letter, which Mr. Arafat said the Palestinian embassy refused to receive.

Mr. Khreizat said that some of Mr. Arafat's statements make the PLO the only body with the right to speak about the Palestinian problem. "But we are part of the Muslim/Arab nation and thus give ourselves the right to speak about the Palestinian issue," he said.

Mr. Khreizat and other Brotherhood deputies said they reject divisions among Arab states and to speak of the sovereignty of some states, to accept the borders that colonial powers drew in the Arab World. "It is a legitimate national and Islamic duty to speak against the

destruction (of the nation)" Brotherhood Deputy Hameed Mansour said.

"We are not against the PLO but against its leadership which wants to continue making concessions" to Israel, said Brotherhood Deputy Abdul Aziz Jaber.

In the press conference, the Brotherhood deputies also urged Jordan to take a clear stand in support of the expelled and the implementation of Resolution 799.

They also called for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq, condemned the visit of former U.S. President George Bush to Kuwait and what they called the "colonial occupation of Somalia and urged Arab and Muslim countries to stand by the Muslim people in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

The Brotherhood deputies congratulated Sudan on its "achievements" and Yemen on the success of its parliamentary elections and condemned what they called state terrorism exercised by governments against their people.

"We demand that these regimes give their people freedom...in order to prevent internal conflict which can only benefit the enemies."

Elections law

(Continued from page 1)

is the only body constitutionally empowered to initiate such a change.

He also rejected views that the current elections law, whose distribution of candidates to constituencies is largely drawn in accordance with allocations made in 1928, is un conducive to fair representation of society.

The law is legitimate and represents all sectors of society, fArguments that it is not are rejected because the law was endorsed by the Lower House," Mr. Khreizat said.

Observers say that changing the elections law, which currently gives voters as many votes as the number of candidates in their precincts, will work to the disadvantage of the Brotherhood, which enjoys a large voter turn-out among its constituencies as well as strong commitment to the leadership's choice of candidates.

Mr. Khreizat and other Brotherhood leaders said their rejection of amending the elections law is rooted in the unconstitutionality of such a step if taken outside the House. They ruled out fear of loss of seats in the House as a reason for their opposition to the change.



Ahmad Nawash creates a balanced picture using the paint, the surfaces, the areas and the gradual colour. Mr. Nawash is a painter who uses his own method, which makes him live in a world of his own and makes us communicate with him through it. His works are far from the violence of the harsh, everyday life. His colours are those of dreams, or perhaps nightmares, but have a glow that seems to come from inside the artist.

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Streets empty as soccer takes centre-stage in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — Soccer fever brought Beirut to a virtual standstill Friday as World Cup competition further broke Lebanon's post-civil war isolation.

The traffic-choked streets of the city emptied as the population prepared to see their first competitive international sport in more than 20 years.

Those who could not get one of the 12,000 tickets for places at the Bourj Hammoud Stadium were glued to their television sets. The traffic jams only end on occasions like this, said one soldier left on street duty in the city.

Streetfighting between Christian and Muslim hands that made Lebanon notorious around the world ended in 1990, but dozens of soldiers stood on the rooftops of apartment blocks around the stadium as Hong Kong beat Bahrain 2-1 in the historic but inauspicious opening match of the Beirut tournament.

The newly renovated Bourj Hammoud Stadium, located in an Armenian neighbourhood that stayed neutral during the civil war, is the only soccer pitch in Lebanon that meets the specifications of FIFA, the world governing body for soccer.

Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri arrived to watch India fight back for a 2-2 draw against the host country in the second match of the day.

Bahrain, Hong Kong, India, Lebanon and South Korea are competing in Group D of the first



Ahmad Hassan (No. 2) from Bahrain and Hong Kong's Lee Wai Man (No. 15) fight for possession of the ball during their Asian Group D World Cup qualifier. Hong Kong won 2-1 (AFP photo)

round of the Asia qualifying tournament to get to the World Cup finals in the U.S. next year.

Bourj Hammoud has undergone a million-dollar renovation to stage this crucial stage in Lebanon's recovery of its self-esteem. The crowd roared with approval when Hariri said in a pre-match speech: "This tournament proves the war is over and that peace has arrived."

It is a message the Lebanese authorities have been repeating since the world football body FIFA awarded the tournament to Beirut last December. Hariri has just returned from a Gulf states tour to drum up some oil money subsidies to help get Beirut rebuilt.

The peace message was reinforced

Italian Open Navratilova, Capriati fall; Sanchez Vicario advances

ROME (AP) — Italy's hope for the future, a 16-year-old qualifier, and veteran Martina Navratilova, the No. 2 seed, were ousted Friday in the quarterfinals of the Italian Open.

Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, seeking her fifth Italian title, made quick work of Francesca Benoitoglio, crushing the youngster 6-1, 6-1 in just over an hour. Sabatini will face No. 1 seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain, who breezed by Jennifer Capriati of the United States 6-2, 6-2 in just over an hour. Sanchez Vicario is the hottest player on the tour.

A crowd of 8,000 that packed centre court of the Foro Italico on a misty night loudly cheered the first Italian to reach the quarters since 1989. But it also applauded Sabatini, one of Rome's favourite players.

The third seeded Sabatini dominated from start to finish in a virtual tennis lesson for the player ranked 329 in the world. At one point, the Argentine returned a lob for a winner by hitting it between her legs with her back to the net.

Spain's Conchita Martinez ousted Navratilova in two quick sets, 6-1, 6-4.

Martinez, No. 6 seed, will meet Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States, who defeated Anke Huber in three sets.

Navratilova's usually strong serve let her down, and Martinez

broke her six times. The American saved one match point, but Martinez went out on the next with a backhand winner.

The match was played on a side court under the lights after rain halted all play at the Foro Italico for four hours.

The fourth seeded Fernandez survived a match point and eliminated her hard-hitting German opponent, the No. 8 seed, 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (7-5).

Navratilova had said she wanted to play the Italian to tune up her game for Wimbledon, which she has won nine times. She is skipped the French Open, the only Grand Slam event played on clay.

Stich battles Lendl: In Hamburg, Germany, Michael Stich kept his dream of a third German final alive by hatching Ivan Lendl to a 6-3, 6-2 defeat in only 72 minutes here Friday.

Lendl, the third seed, had begun the day by finishing off South African Marcos Ondruska.

Leading 5-3 overnight in the final set, he duly completed a 2-6, 6-1, 6-4 victory to reach the quarterfinals.

But Stich soon had him flinching his racket on to the ground in disgust during a performance full of errors.

The German had lost all of the six previous meetings between the pair, the most recent in the Munich final last week.

But the sixth seed exploited his powerful serve and volley game to oust a frustrated Lendl and reach the semifinals.

Stich will now play Emilio Sanchez in his semifinal, with Bernd Karbacher of Germany facing Russia's Andre Chesnokov in the other.

Spaniard Sanchez had continued his recent renaissance with a fine victory over big-serving Richard Krajicek.

Bouncing back after a disappointing few months, the 16th seed followed up his win over Stefan Edberg with an equally efficient 6-7 (4-7), 6-3, 6-3 demolition of the seventh seeded Dutchman.

Fromberg beats Wheaton: In Tampa, Florida, Richard Fromberg of Australia, playing in his second singles match of the day, defeated third-seeded David Wheaton 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 Friday night to earn a semifinal berth at the 260,000 USTA men's clay of Tampa.

Fromberg will meet Bryan Shelton, who downed second-seeded Wally Masur of Australia, 6-4, 6-4.

Defending champion Jaime Yzaga and Patrick McEnroe also advanced to the semifinals.

Yzaga got past fourth-seeded Todd Martin 7-6 (7-3), 4-6, 6-1, while McEnroe beat former Stanford University teammate Jeff Tarango, 6-4, 6-4.

Creatine said to boost performance — and it's legal

LONDON (AP) — Studies indicate it can improve stamina, energy and athletic performance. Runners and rowers say they have received a boost from it. Olympic athletes have used it in training.

Steroid? Stimulant? You won't find it on any banned list. This stuff is perfectly legal.

Creatine, a substance occurring naturally in human muscle and present in fish and meat, is being hailed as a "wonder food" — the biggest breakthrough in nutrition-related performance enhancement since the advent of carbohydrate loading in the 1960s.

While some officials express skepticism and caution, researchers in Britain and Sweden assert that supplements of creatine can improve performance by as much as 5 per cent without violating any rules or posing any health risks.

"It's no different than carbohydrate loading," said Swedish researcher Eric Hultman, who has been carrying out studies on creatine for more than 20 years. "I hope it can be a good alternative to drugs."

Creatine recently went on sale in tablet form under the brand name Ergomax, currently available in Britain and several other European countries.

Hultman and his colleagues said they found that creatine supplements can increase the store of energy in the muscles, maximising performance in short-burst activities and reducing fatigue and recovery time.

"It won't increase performance above that which can be produced naturally under normal conditions," said Paul Greenhaff, a British researcher from Nottingham who works closely with Hultman. "What it will do is increase the rate of recovery so you can obtain optimal performance for a longer period of time. It offsets the development of fatigue."

The studies indicate the supplements mainly benefit people with lower levels of creatine in their bodies. Those with high levels show little if any improvement.

"In the worst circumstance, creatine could have no effect," Greenhaff said. "In the best circum-

stance, you can have a 5 per cent increase in the amount of work you can sustain."

Roger Harris, a physiologist at the animal health trust in Newmarket who has worked with Hultman since the 1970s, said creatine could have an impact on world records.

"If you happen to be a world record-holder, one can only assume you will do better," he said. "It will be exciting to see this."

Several British Olympic athletes used creatine in training for last summer's Barcelona Games, including 100-metre gold medalist Linford Christie, women's 400-metre hurdles Champion Sally Gunnell and 110-metre hurdler Colin Jackson.

The Cambridge University rowing team used Ergomax during training for three months before defeating heavily-favoured Oxford in the boat race in March.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) has found nothing wrong with taking creatine.

"This is a naturally occurring product which we get with normal food," said Prof. Arne Ljungqvist, chairman of the IAAF medical commission. "You wouldn't classify sugar-taking as doping, would you? If people want to take vitamins in pills instead of in food, they do it. It's the same thing here. We feel there is no reason to intervene."

The British Athletics Federation takes a cautious view.

"There is a general concern that the line is getting closer and closer between proscribed and prescribed supplements and drugs," said federation spokesman Tony Ward.

The main concern is that athletes will take excessively high levels of the product on the flawed assumption that the more they use the more they will improve.

One possible deterrent is the cost. A one-month supply of 64 Ergomax tablets currently sells in Britain for 40 pounds (\$63).

Is it ethical for athletes to use creatine for the same reason they would take illegal drugs?

Supporters say it's no different from eating high amounts of carbohydrates — known as carbo loading, training at altitude or using state-of-the-art running shoes.

'Lewis to undergo implant operation'

BOSTON (Agencies) — Reggie Lewis, whose career with the Boston Celtics has been threatened by a heart problem, reportedly will undergo an implant operation that could put him back on the court.

The Boston Globe reported Saturday that Lewis, suffering from a heart arrhythmia that caused him to collapse on court during a playoff game against Charlotte April 29, is expected to have an implantable defibrillator device placed under the muscles of his abdomen, possibly this weekend.

The defibrillator can quickly restore an erratic heart rhythm to normal.

Lewis was to play with a defibrillator, it would be the first time any amateur or professional athlete returned to sports with such a device.

Results of first-round National Basketball Association playoff games played Friday:

Eastern Conference
New Jersey 96 Cleveland 79 (Best-of-five series tied 2-2)

Western Conference
San Antonio 100 Portland 97 (OT) (San Antonio wins best-of-five series 3-1).

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Injured Forget withdraws from French Open

PARIS (R) — France's top player Guy Forget said Saturday he was withdrawing from the French Open tennis championships because of a knee injury. "I have to rest for at least a month but I hope to be fit for the Wimbledon Championships," the 28-year-old Forget told a news conference. Forget, 17th-ranked in the world, has suffered problems with his right knee for more than a year. He said the pain had become unbearable.

Famed arena to close boxing division

NEW YORK (AP) — Madison Square Garden, once the showcase of fighters like John L. Sullivan and Joe Louis, is terminating its boxing division, the Garden said Friday. "It's unfortunate," Garden boxing spokesman Steve Griffith said. A source told the Associated Press the reason for the decision was financial. The Garden has been losing money on boxing. The New York Daily News and Post broke the story in Friday's editions. The Daily News said the decision was by the Garden's parent company, Paramount Communications Inc., because of allegations of ties between the sport and organised crime.

Prost secures 5th successive pole position

BARCELONA (R) — Alain Prost secured his fifth consecutive pole position Saturday when he clocked the fastest time in final qualifying for the Spanish Grand Prix. Prost, driving a Williams, recorded a best time of one minute 17.809 seconds at an average speed of 219.63 kph, in the process setting a qualifying lap record for the circuit de Catalunya. Prost's time lifted him half a second clear of his British team mate Damon Hill.

Louganis among 10 inducted into Hall of Fame

FORT LAUDERDALE (AP) — Diving champion Greg Louganis, butterfly record-holder Mary T. Meagher, six-time Olympic gold medalist Kristi Otto and distance stand-out Vladimir Salnikov were among 10 athletes and coaches inducted Friday into the International Swimming Hall of Fame. Louganis was the world's top diver in the 1980s, sweeping platform and springboard titles in the 1984 and 1988 Olympics. Meagher set the two longest-standing records in swimming in 1981, 57.93 seconds in the 100-metre butterfly and 2:05.96 for 200 metres, marks that have not been seriously challenged since. She won three gold medals in the 1984 Olympics and added a bronze in the 200 butterfly in 1988. Otto won the 50-and-100-metre freestyle, the 100 backstroke and 100 butterfly in the 1988 Olympics as well as swimming legs for the East German freestyle and medley relay teams. Her six golds established an Olympic record for a woman swimmer. Salnikov made history in the 1980 Olympics when he became the first to swim 1,500 metres in less than 15 minutes.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MAY 9, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You find it difficult to solve perplexing problems today even when you concentrate intently upon what you are attempting to do. Hold off on considering solutions that come to your attention through public media.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A good day to get out early to do whatever errands claim your attention and to do your weekend shopping but later a jaunt for a different purpose is in the works.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can handle money matters well in the early morning after which some practical matter with another person arises requiring your complete attention.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have great charm in the early morning and you should use this to improve conditions about you after which an outside partner claims your attention.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Do what pleases your close companion early in the morning and then get at those various activities that require considerable thought, action.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your best way to operate today is to see and be with various friends and acquaintances with whom you want to be allied in the future so don't confine your attention to just one.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September

22) Be out early to get one in power to go along with what you desire, then you can take family members with you to some outside place and enjoy yourselves.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Meet with one you want to impress of different views from yours early after which get into routine activities, get then in back of you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Do what pleases your attachment early then you will be able to get into other activities of importance to you and handle them in an interesting fashion.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You make a strenuous early by giving some desired support but later you find it necessary to be very tactful with other outside associates.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get your environment enhanced so it has more charm early with others in attending to whatever joint activities exist.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make plans to have a good time early in the daytime, then get together with attachment and friends for the recreations that are mutually enjoyable.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Improve whatever is possible at your residence early which is easy for later you find some outside condition requires your attention to solve.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I didn't have a tip for the pizza boy, so I gave him a coupon for 50 cents off on toothpaste."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BILLE
BELZA
YAUNES
REMAID



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

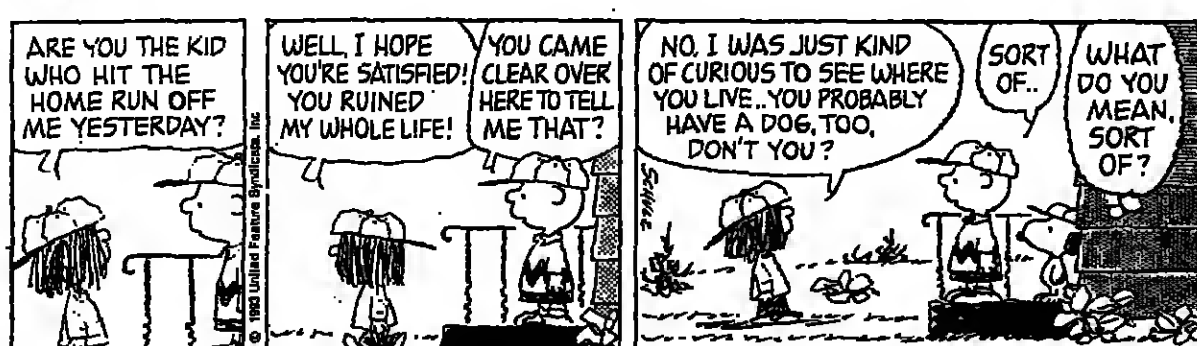
Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

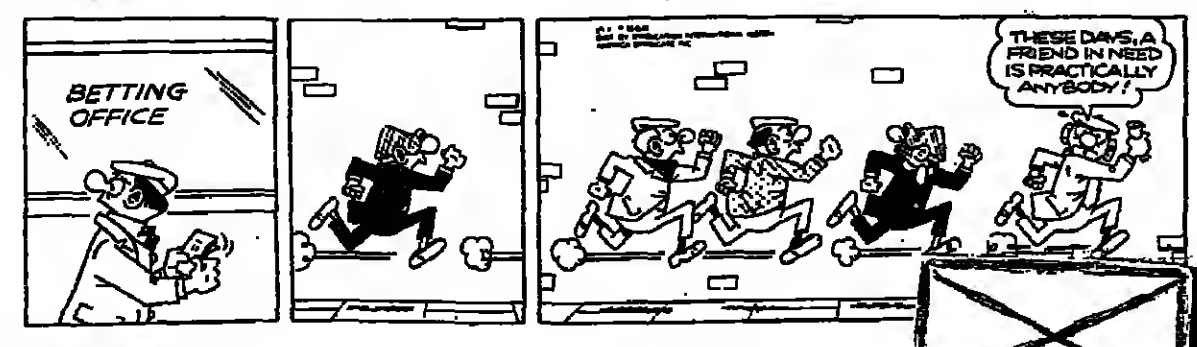
Jumbles: MOUNT FILMY INFORM GALAXY

Answer: What horse meat is to a dog — "FILLY" MIGNON

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
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A CARDINAL RULE

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ K 10 3
♥ A K 5
♦ 10 9 2
♣ Q 8 4

WEST
♠ A 9 8 7 4
♥ J 10 6 2
♦ K J 6 5
♣ Void

EAST
♠ J 5 2
♥ Q 8 4 3
♦ 8 4 3
♣ J 7 2

SOUTH
♠ Q 6
♥ Q 7
♦ Q 7
♣ A K 10 6 5 3

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Dbl 8 NT 1 ♠
Pass 2 ♠ 3 NT Pass
6 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♣

Cardinal Morton had a simple means of determining whether London merchants owed taxes to the royal treasury. If they lived lavishly, obviously they were making pots of money and could afford heavy taxes. And if they lived frugally, it was because they were hoarding every penny and also could afford the burden of taxation. His name lives in bridge as the Morton's Fork Coup. This is a pretty example.

West took advantage of the vulnerability to make a shapely double of South's opening bid of one club. Since North's redouble guaranteed

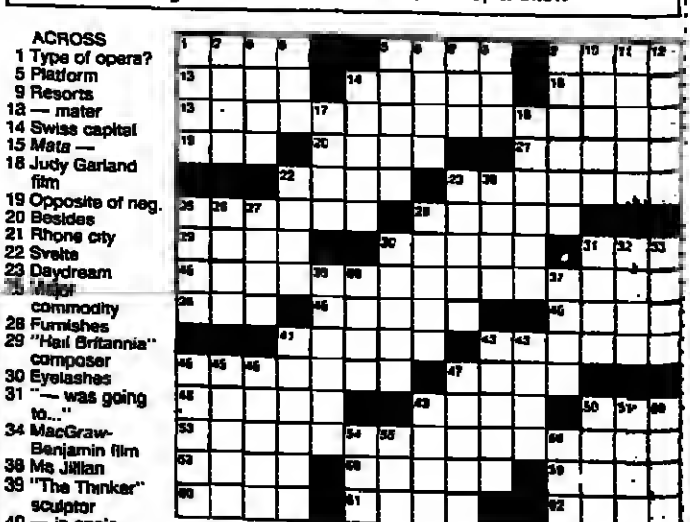
another bid, South passed at his second turn to see how the auction would develop. When North showed a good hand by jumping to three no trump, South took a shot at a club slam — North had to have at least one ace on this auction.

West led a heart, taken in the closed hand. Declarer, Goren editorial board member Tom Smith of Greenwich, Conn., cashed the ace of trumps — had the suit split 2-1, declarer's task would have been easier. With trumps 3-0, it seems that South has to finesse West for the jack of spades (or East for the jack of diamonds on a different line), but since the bidding marked West for the king of diamonds, declarer found a better way.

To the third trick declarer led a low spade, and West was impaled on Morton's Fork. The defender West could not rise with the ace without allowing the declarer two diamond discards — one on each of the table's major suits — but playing low proved no better. Declarer won in dummy with the king, cashed two hearts for a spade discard, and ruffed a spade in hand. King of clubs and a club to the queen provided the entry to ruff the remaining spade while drawing the outstanding trump.

Now declarer exited with the queen of diamonds. In with the king. West had either to yield a ruff-stuff or else lead a diamond into declarer's combined tenace. Either way, the slam was home.

THE Daily Crossword by Harvey L. Chew



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solvers:

44 Astrad	12 Timid person	BORE AORTA RAIN
47 Teflon	14 Show to be false	DRIT SPURT RAIN
48 Bistro	17 Shopping center	DRIT SPURT RAIN
50 Letter	18 Actor Martin	HELENE MARGARY
53 Eddie Murphy	21 Hated	PERLONE DEERN
57 Level	23 Criminal	PERLONE DEERN
58 Hail	24 Imago	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
59 Solo	26 Spic	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
60 M. Horne	26 Sci-fi movie	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
61 Mistle	27 Shortly	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
62 Exclusive group	28 Within the law	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	30 Gave up	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
DOWN	31 Rhyne scheme	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
1 Ground corn	32 Fat	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
2 Spread	33 Words of	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
3 Iowa city	34 Understanding	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
4 Cereus	35 More	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
5 Religious belief	36 Confusion of	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
6 River in Italy	37 Time past	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
7 — and out	38 Spouse	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
8 Tennis term	41 United series	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
9 Knee-jump	42 Lined character	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
10 trousers	43 Frisier	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	44 Haters	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	45 Confusion of	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	46 Eccle attendant	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	47 Dealer's concern	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	48 Scorch	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	49 Frisier	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	50 Light color	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	51 Earth	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	52 Pasty	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	53 Quarrel	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	54 Arithmetic	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	55 Affirmative	PIED PIPER RAPTOR
	56 Pouch	PIED PIPER RAPTOR

3 Cambodian factions seek weapons back for protection

PHNOM PENH (R) — Three Cambodian factions which earlier surrendered weapons to U.N. peacekeepers have asked for them back because of renewed violence by Khmer Rouge guerrillas. U.N. and Cambodian officials said Saturday.

If the request were granted, it could mean the return of 53,000 weapons to the factions less than two weeks before U.N.-organised national elections scheduled for May 23-27.

The Phnom Penh government army, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front and royalist guerrillas made the request at a joint military meeting with the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), said U.N. military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Dick Falk.

"They wish to take them back. They are concerned about security, that the NADK (Khmer Rouge guerrillas) will attack them," he said.

Because of the political sensitivity of the request, the factions had been asked to consult their political leaders about it, he said.

"No decision has yet been made and as far as I know no weapons have yet been released," Col. Falk said.

Releasing the weapons would signal the final failure of efforts by the 22,000-strong UNTAC force, monitoring the 1991 peace agreement, to disarm most of the combatants in the 13-year civil war before the start of polling.

Last summer the Maoist Khmer Rouge guerrillas, who

were in loose alliance with the KPNLF and the royalists during the civil war, refused to go along with disarmament.

The Khmer Rouge has since announced a boycott of the elections and vowed to use violence to disrupt them.

In the past week it has launched attacks in northwest, central, eastern and southern provinces, which killed dozens of people and wounded scores. The guerrillas also attacked peacekeepers, U.N. officials say.

At a news conference at the Khmer Rouge jungle stronghold just inside the Thai-Cambodian border Friday, spokesman Mak Ben admitted taking part in attacks, notably on Siem Reap town, but denied attacking U.N. peacekeepers.

On Tuesday, suspected Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked a U.N. convoy in a northwestern zone, killing one Japanese policeman and seriously wounding two others. Five Dutch marines were also hurt.

The Royalist National Army for an Independent Kampuchea said it was asking for its weapons back after that attack. Royalist official Roland Eng said there was "no question" that the Khmer Rouge were responsible for the ambush.

"The Khmer Rouge want to disturb the election and we have to protect ourselves and UNTAC," he said.

"We need the weapons to show the Khmer Rouge that we don't want to joke with them. We are

taking this very seriously."

The royalist army has already stepped up armed patrols of its northwestern zones which it shares uneasily with the Khmer Rouge. Soldiers from 30 per cent of each total force are allowed to retain their weapons under the peace agreement.

Col. Falk said 52,928 weapons were put into U.N. cantonment last year, mostly small arms. Of these 6,804 were handed in by the KPNLF and 4,555 from the royalist army. The rest were from the government.

U.N. officials estimate at least three times this number remain in circulation, mainly in the government army.

Mr. Mak Ben said only the formation of a "provisional government of national reconciliation" can bring political stability to Cambodia.

He said the Communist group would meet with the country's three other main factions only to discuss the formation of such a body, which would include representatives of each group.

The Khmer Rouge boycotted an emergency meeting in Peking this week called by Cambodian head of state Norodom Sihanouk to discuss instability as the country approaches elections May 23-28.

The country's three other main factions attended the Peking meeting and vowed to hold the U.N.-supervised elections, which are a key element of a 1991 peace agreement that was supposed to restore peace and stability to the

country.

Mr. Mak Ben said the election "is unacceptable to the Cambodian people and the Cambodian National Resistance" and "will not allow the Cambodian people to exercise their right to self-determination."

Meanwhile, despite escalating violence and an election boycott by the Khmer Rouge, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali Friday recommended that Cambodia's first free elections be held this month as scheduled.

"It is clear that the United Nations is called upon to do its utmost to proceed with the election," Dr. Ghali said in a written report to the Security Council.

"Not to proceed would mean ceding to unacceptable threats and giving the right of veto over the peace process to an armed group that has rejected its commitment under the Paris agreements," he said.

Japan sent its home affairs minister to Cambodia Saturday to try to improve security for its peacekeepers there after the killing of the Japanese policeman.

"I shall be asking (the U.N. authorities in Cambodia) to tighten security arrangements for Japanese peacekeepers," news reports quoted Keijiro Murata as saying.

Mr. Murata was expected to hold talks in Phnom Penh Monday with Yasushi Akashi, Japanese head of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia, the reports said.



Khmer Rouge spokesman Mak Ben (left foreground) talks to reporters Friday at the Cambodian border town of Phum Malai (AFP photo)

Major under pressure to fire Lamont

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major came under intense pressure Saturday to fire his unpopular chancellor of the exchequer or risk losing his own job after his ruling Conservatives suffered an electoral hammering.

A growing band of Conservative members of parliament told Mr. Major he must assert his authority by dismissing Chancellor (Finance Minister) Norman Lamont after voters made it clear they had no confidence in the government's economic policies.

"My feeling is that if this government is to have any credibility left... we have got to have a change of chancellor," said Conservative MP John Carlisle.

"And we have got to have, frankly, the smack of firm leadership. If the prime minister continues to resist changes and to protect his friends then his own position must itself be in jeopardy. To save himself, he has got to sacrifice others."

Mr. Major acknowledged that voters gave his government "a bloody nose" at the ballot box Thursday. The Conservatives lost a parliamentary seat they had held since 1924 by a huge margin and emerged from local elections controlling only one of the 47 councils in England and Wales.

Thirteen months after returning Mr. Major to power in general elections, voters took revenge

for broken promises over taxes and economic recovery and a series of political blunders on issues such as coal pit closures.

Mr. Lamont, already discredited over the withdrawal of sterling from the European Community's exchange rate mechanism last September, is blamed for the longest recession since the 1930s.

The affable Major, 50, whose relaxed style contrasts with that of his predecessor Margaret Thatcher, has ignored calls for his removal.

Political analysts said Mr. Major urgently needed to assert his dominance or risk a challenge to his leadership.

U.S. Navy to scrap over 100 ships in cutbacks

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Navy is to reduce its fleet from 460 to 340 ships, and to postpone or cancel the purchase of new-generation bombers, as part of largescale cutbacks, the Washington Post reported Saturday.

The navy is to keep its 12 aircraft-carriers, but cut back its submarine fleet, the paper added.

The plan outlined by the Post calls for the scrapping of aging A-6 bombers and putting off for a decade the purchase of AFX aircraft, equipped with Stealth radar, which are due to replace them.

The paper said that navy and air force chiefs are even considering scrapping the AFX altogether and replacing it with a fighter-bomber which would cost less and be used by both parts of the armed forces.

Meanwhile, the United States said Friday it will close or cut operations at another 46 overseas military sites, mostly in Europe, and bring home 6,100 more U.S. troops in a continuing round of post-cold war budget cuts.

The eleventh round of such reductions at overseas bases since early 1990 will include 22 sites in Germany, 10 in Britain, 10 in South Korea, three in Italy and one in Morocco, the Defence Department announced.

Virtually all the troops affected in the latest round would be in Europe. The cuts in South Korea involve very small facilities such as radar sites.

"This latest round of reductions brings to 744 overseas installations — 679 in Europe — where operations will be ended, reduced or placed on standby" in less than four years, the Pentagon said.

The 744 worldwide installations represent 45 per cent of U.S. facilities overseas at the beginning of 1990.

There were 173,000 U.S. military personnel stationed in Europe as of March 1, including 105,000 army troops. The move announced Friday would eventually reduce that total to about 167,000.

The Pentagon is moving to cut the overall U.S. troop presence in Europe to 100,000 by 1995 on orders from Congress to slash the defence budget after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Friday's announcement came at a time when defence officials and some members of Congress are warning that the U.S. military presence in Europe must not be cut too quickly because of potential trouble spots such as the bloody civil war in Yugoslavia.

Returns or partial returns of military facilities to host countries overseas since January 1990 have reduced the U.S. military presence abroad by some 140,000 troops, most of those in Western Europe.

The largest site affected by Friday's announcement would be the U.S. army's facilities at Taunus-Kaserne in Germany. The partial closing of sites there would affect more than 3,400 military personnel and an additional 540 U.S. civilian and 473 foreign workers.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Georgia gets new defence minister

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — The defence minister resigned in a power struggle with Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze and was replaced by a 27-year-old former Red Army captain, reports said. Tengiz Kitovani resigned when it became clear the parliament would not confirm him as both deputy prime minister and defence minister. He had held both posts since the current government was formed last year. Mr. Kitovani rose to power after rebelling from the Georgian National Guard and leading the forces that toppled former President Zviad Gamsakhurdia last January, paving the way for Mr. Shevardnadze's return to power. He since has advocated a harsh policy of military force against several pro-independence ethnic groups in the southern former Soviet republic. Mr. Shevardnadze nominated General Georgy Karkarashvili, who was approved by Georgia's parliament Thursday with a vote of 149-6. Mr. Shevardnadze said Gen. Karkarashvili would continue Mr. Kitovani's policies. Gen. Karkarashvili graduated from the Tbilisi Artillery School and served in Afghanistan as a former Red Army captain. He formerly served in Abkhazia whose Muslim minority has been battling for independence from the Georgian government in Tbilisi.

German bunker housing refugees attacked

BREMEN, Germany (R) — Unidentified attackers hurled two firebombs at a World War II air raid shelter used to house foreign refugees, police in the northern German city of Bremen said Saturday. Police said one petrol bomb ignited but did no damage to the outside concrete wall of the windowless bunker shortly after midnight. About 70 people live in the make-shift hostel. Refugees from Eastern Europe and the developing world, drawn to Germany by a liberal law on political asylum, have been the targets of a year and a half of firebombings and brutal attacks by neo-Nazi gangs.

Ukraine resents U.S. pressure

KIEV (AP) — U.S. pressure on Ukraine to get rid of nuclear weapons has caused resentment here and strengthened those who want to keep the arms, officials and analysts from both countries said this week. As a result, U.S. ambassador-at-large Strobe Talbott is expected to take a softer approach when he visits Kiev Sunday and Monday. While the United States will continue to insist that Ukrainian legislators ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, it will try to show more understanding and offer economic incentives in return. The sentiment that Mr. Talbott may damage before the lawmakers may include greater assistance for Ukraine's troubled economy and the \$175 million that the United States has offered to help dismantle the weapons.

China bans gifts to officials

PEKING (R) — China has threatened severe punishment for officials who accept gifts in exchange for favours. A circular issued by the Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council (cabinet) bans the practice, Xinhua News Agency said Saturday. The circular did not make clear how gift would be uprooted in China, where the practice is deeply entrenched. But it warned: "Those who extort gifts or securities will be punished severely." The agency said the circular pointed out that it was "highly reprehensible" for officials to receive or give gifts or securities.

Colombian rebel leader offers truce

BOGOTA (R) — The head of Colombia's second biggest guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), offered a truce in his decades-old war on the state Friday if the government agreed to stop fighting the rebels. ELN chief Manuel Perez, in an interview with Spanish Television, also said he would accept Spanish government mediation with the Colombian administration to secure a ceasefire. "We are ready to agree a truce now, at the moment the government decides that it is bilateral," said Mr. Perez, 50, a former Spanish priest who has led the 3,000-strong ELN for over two decades in its struggle to turn Colombia into a Marxist state.

Clinton unveils campaign reform plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton has unveiled a plan for financing political campaigns that would sharply cut contributions by special interest groups and the wealthy to congressional and presidential campaigns and would allow some public financing of congressional races. "On this day we seek to reform our political process, to restore the faith of our people in their democracy," Mr. Clinton said, saying his package would give challengers better odds and ensure "the voice of the people as a whole is heard over the voices of the special interests in Washington." Under present arrangements, campaigns for the presidency are financed in part from public funds. Campaigns for Congress depend on private contributions. All are expensive by world standards, largely because of big amounts that candidates spend to buy time on television. Mr. Clinton's package would place voluntary spending caps on congressional races, reduce contributions of political action committees formed by special groups and all but eliminate so-called soft money donations by corporations, labour unions and the wealthy to national political parties.

S. African CP leader charged with Hani murder

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Leading white Conservative Clive Derby-Lewis has been charged with the assassination of South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani, police said Saturday.

Mr. Derby-Lewis's Australian-born wife, Gaye, and a Polish immigrant have already been charged with the killing.

Police spokesman Frans Malherbe told the South African Press Association that Mr. Clive Derby-Lewis, 57, a former Conservative Party member of parliament and a member of the advisory President's Council, would appear in court on May 12.

Mr. Hani, gunned down outside his home on April 10, was a former African National Congress (ANC) guerrilla commander and a member of the ANC negotiating team at multi-party talks about a transition from white rule to a non-racial democracy.

Police have said they suspect Mr. Hani's murder, which unleashed a wave of bitter township violence including attacks on whites, was part of a right-wing conspiracy.

Mr. Clive Derby-Lewis was detained without charge under security laws on April 17 and police later arrested his wife.

Polish immigrant Janusz Walus was arrested minutes after Mr. Hani was killed.

Officials say Mr. Walus was a member of the militant right-wing Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) and other far-right groups opposed to apartheid reform.

Police have said they suspect Mr. Hani's murder, which unleashed a wave of bitter township violence including attacks on whites, was part of a right-wing conspiracy.

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Italy's local polls to measure public response to scandals

ROME (R) — Campaigning officially begins in Italy this weekend for local elections which will show for the first time how badly the country's huge corruption scandal has hit its main political parties.

Candidates' lists closed at midnight Saturday for the June 6 elections in which 11 million voters, around one quarter of the total, will elect 1,230 city councils including the big northern centres of Milan and Turin.

"That's when the parties will realise just how much damage the scandal has done," said Christian Democrat (DC) parliamentarian Francesco D'Onofrio.

"So far they don't seem to have grasped just what an explosion in their ranks it has seen," he told reporters.

The campaign will keep the 15-month scandal in the headlines as Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi begins his task of enacting electoral reform by the August summer break.

Parliament gave Mr. Ciampi's

nine-day-old government the green light Friday night when it endorsed his programme in a vital confidence vote.

A nationwide rebuff of his DC and their Socialist allies in the city hall elections is bound to prompt opposition calls for his resignation, political sources said.

Italy's corruption scandal has devastated both parties, which between them have formed the basis of all ruling coalitions for the last 30 years.

The Socialists have seen their 14 per cent share of the national vote dragged down to an estimated four per cent by "revelations they routinely demanded huge bribes from businessmen as a price for political favours."

No fewer than 44 of the 140 Socialist members of parliament are under official investigation, as are 10 of the 37 members of its executive.

The much larger DC, Italy's dominant post-war party, has suffered even worse humiliation af-

ter a succession of mafia informers accused its former leaders of having close links to organised crime.

In the last general election in April 1992, the DC's share of the vote fell below 30 per cent for the first time, and although it remains strong in the south, several commentators believe it is no longer an effective political force in the rich industrial north.

"These elections will be the third and last phase of this regime's decline," said Umberto Bossi, leader of the fast-rising Northern League, expected to be the elections' big winner.

The first, he told reporters this week, was the 1992 ballot in which voters deserted the established parties in favour of reformist and protest groups.

The second, he added, was the runaway success of last month's referendum which proposed scrapping proportional representation as a means of electing members of the Senate

Disney's daughter assails critical book

LOS ANGELES (R) — Walt Disney's daughter has said a book that claims her legendary animator father was an informer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and a Nazi sympathiser was "nasty, mean-spirited revisionism."

Diane Disney Miller also criticised recent coverage of Marc Eliot's soon-to-be-published book Walt Disney, Hollywood's Dark Prince, whose charges have surprised Disney experts.

Describing her father as a "rather ordinary guy," Mrs. Miller said in a statement she was dismayed that respectable news outlets had published stories about the book without seeking

reaction from her or other sources close to her father.

"This conduct is outrageous and has caused me and my family great distress," Mrs. Miller said. "There are no dark, dirty secrets in my father's life." She said her father's life was "pretty much an open book."

However, Eliot's book, due out in July, quotes a former Disney animator as saying he saw Disney and company lawyer Gunther Lessing at Nazi Party meetings and rallies.

Moreover, Eliot believes that the man who gave the world Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck was an FBI informer for 26 years, was committed to the right-wing

America First Committee and was "one of Hollywood's most active pre-war isolationists."

The New York Times said the FBI assertion was backed up by 570 pages of heavily censored material obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

However, biographers and associates have either cast doubt on the charges or said glimmers of truth were taken out of context.

For example, while the anti-Communist Disney may have been friendly with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, so were most of the Hollywood studio chiefs, they said.

Yeltsin aide tells rivals their days are numbered

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A top aide to Boris Yeltsin Saturday told political leaders who failed to back the president in his battle with Russia's conservative legislature that their days in power may be numbered.

Yeltsin administration chief Sergei Filatov gave the strongest sign yet that the president, boosted by a referendum victory last month, would carry out his promises to end the crippling stand-off.

Pressure was mounting on Mr. Yeltsin to act, as fears grew of street violence Sunday during rallies to mark Victory Day, commemorating the defeat of Nazi Germany.

A policeman was killed and 600 people were injured last weekend in fights between hardline conservatives and police.

"With this referendum result, the entire presidential team should now consist of reform supporters," Mr. Filatov told ITAR-TASS News Agency. Russian voters expressed confidence in the president himself and in his radical economic reforms.

Mr. Filatov named Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi and Yurii Skokov, secretary of Mr. Yeltsin's powerful "inner cabinet" or Security Council, as dissenters from the presidential line.

Mr. Skokov "does not support the president on many issues",

country's army — a professional, high-tech, lean and mobile force that protects the nation and its own personnel.

"We have laid a solid legal foundation for the functioning of the army and navy, and started their radical reorganisation," President Boris Yeltsin said in a statement Friday.

"We are taking measures to provide solid social protection for the servicemen and veterans, including the personnel who retired from the (Soviet) armed services and those who left because of cutbacks."

The statements came two days before the Sunday holiday marking the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany. They seemed designed mainly to rally service personnel who provide a crucial pillar of political support for Mr. Yeltsin.

The comments possibly also were timed to counter any fallout from Mr. Yeltsin's criticism this week of Mr. Rutskoi, who is believed to have the support of some officers in a dispute with Mr. Yeltsin over reforms.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, who has been careful not to take sides openly in the feud, summed up his work and plans for the future in a report carried by ITAR-TASS.

Sounding many themes elaborated in the past, Mr. Grachev added Friday that he planned to propose lowering the mandatory

term of military service from two years to one. He said Russia needs a high-tech force, which could threaten the country's industries suffering from defence cuts.

"Russia needs an army of no more than 1 million men, but it must be a professional force armed with advanced and standardised equipment," Mr. Grachev said. "Its backbone must consist of highly mobile troops capable of being deployed quickly over great distances."

Mr. Grachev said the former Soviet military he inherited last year was demoralised and "practically incapable of conducting, if necessary, military operations without replenishment and additional armaments."

Russian military officials managed to reverse the trends, crack down on corruption and reorganise the country's military districts, Mr. Grachev said. But political and economic chaos was complicating the work.

Mr. Grachev claimed success with the task, saying: "Lack of faith in the Russian army's ability to exist and reform itself independently has been surmounted."

Reporting on conversion of the army into a professional force, Mr. Grachev said 60,000 men had been accepted into the army on a contractual basis this year. Another 50,000 were being considered for service.

COLUMN

Prince accused of 'pot belly' gaffe in Hungary tour

LONDON (R) — Britain's popular press accused royal consort Prince Philip of marring Queen Elizabeth's state visit to Hungary with a stray remark about how local food could give visitors a "pot-belly". The 71-year-old prince, who once caused a furore with a quip about "litty eyes" during a tour of China, made the offending comment during a walkabout through Budapest on the final day of his wife's state visit to Hungary. Britain's tabloids, which rarely pass up an opportunity to rebuke the crisis-torn royals, said the prince struck up a conversation with a Briton in the crowd who had been in Hungary for two weeks. "You can't have been here that long, you haven't got a pot belly (paunch)," the prince was reported to have said. The story was printed in Saturday's times and most tabloid newspapers, which said the comment risked offending the Hungarians by suggesting they were fat, although it could be seen as a tribute to the generosity of his hosts and the quality of their food.

Man survives close encounter with two lions

NEW YORK (AFP) — You have to be crazy to want to face off with two lions and even luckier to survive, and that is exactly what happened to Alfredo Rials, a schizophrenic who left New York's Bronx Zoo with 19 stitches, but alive, Mr. Rials, 32, Wednesday climbed three fences to get inside the zoo's African Plains exhibit and sit face-to-face with two, 160-kilogramme (350-pound) female lions for 10 minutes. At first the lions appeared to be playing with Mr. Rials, then they knocked him about until one of the predators clawed and mawled him. Police officers from beyond the fences told Mr. Rials to lie in a fetal position and proceeded to shout and make noises to distract the lions which were finally led away by zoo keepers. Mr. Rials was given 19 stitches to the head and face and was expected to remain in hospital for two weeks for psychiatric evaluation. His mother told police that he had a history of schizophrenia. "That man had a charmed life. The Lord was smiling on us today," said senior Bronx Zoo keeper Loraine Hebbonik after the incident. The entire nerve-wracking ordeal was videotaped by a visitor and parts of it were shown on television news.

IRS seizes Jerry Lee Lewis' pianos

NESBIT, Miss. (AP) — Federal tax agents seized pianos, furniture and mementos from Jerry Lee Lewis' house and planned to auction them unless the rock 'n' roll legend pays more than \$1.6 million in back taxes. "The Lewises are aware of what is happening, and their reaction is abject horror," said the singer's attorney, who has been trying to settle the tax bill. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents went to the house and took three pianos, guitars and electric keyboards, along with velvet chairs, a grandfather clock, concert posters and household appliances. No auction date was set. Lewis was performing in Europe, said Kim Schuerman, a cousin of Kerrie Lewis, the singer's wife. The government said Lewis owes taxes for 11 years, from 1978 to 1988 and for 1989 and 1991. He filed for bankruptcy protection in 1988 and was freed of some debt, but not the \$1.6 million. "Jerry Lee wants to pay what he owes," said his lawyer, Charles Waldman. "He needs to get up on high ground, to earn the money to pay these debts."

Viewers shocked by porn in place of family show

BANGKOK (AFP) — Viewers settling down to watch a morning show on a military-owned Thai television channel were shocked to find it broadcasting explicit sex scenes, the Daily News reported. Viewers of House Number Five rushed to their telephones to complain about the slip up when producers on Channel Five accidentally broadcast a pornographic movie instead of the normal family-oriented show, the Thai-language paper said. The newspaper said the producers were "testing" the tape during a broadcast of House Number Five when one of the staff accidentally pressed a switch beaming out the porn movie. "We are investigating the case," a TV official said, declining further comment. The Daily News did not say how long the channel broadcast the sex scenes.